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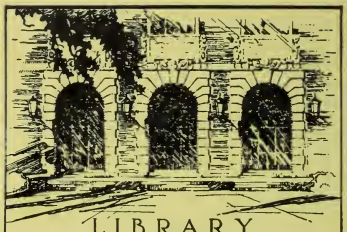
BY

HOLME LEE



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Edith Mary Rawlaw,

from her affectionate friend,

Edward Riggall.

March 1880.

# TUFLONGBO'S JOURNEY

## IN SEARCH OF OGRES.

LAPPIT AND LOB PURSUING THE ENCHANTED DUMPLINGS. p. 214.

# TUFLONGBO'S JOURNEY

## IN SEARCH OF OGRES;

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS EARLY LIFE, AND

HOW HIS SHOES GOT WORN OUT.

By HOLME LEE,

AUTHOR OF "LEGENDS FROM FAIRY LAND," "ADVENTURES OF TUFLONGBO AND HIS COMPANIONS," ETC.

*WITH SIX ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. SANDERSON.*

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# TUFLONGBO'S LIFE AND ADVENTURES.

## Part the First.

### TUFLONGBO'S CHILDHOOD.

#### I.

#### HIS BIRTH AND PARENTAGE.

In setting forth to the world the lives of those eminent persons who have left a mark on their generation, it is usual first to descant upon their origin, or, where that is shrouded in obscurity, to speculate on such particulars as ingenious suggestion or careful research may have amassed. It is not my intention to depart from this rule in narrating the history of Tuflongbo. Character is a growth, not a spontaneous creation of the will; and as precision is the beauty of biography, it will be my earnest endeavour to trace the flower of

those qualities which made him great and famous to their germs in his honoured progenitors and his own early education. I am not unaware that many conflicting accounts of his birth have obtained various degrees of credence in different quarters; and here, perhaps, it may be as well to mention—and at once to repudiate — the chief amongst those legends with which interested writers have sought to embarrass the true course of history concerning Tuflongbo's descent.

With an obstinacy of ignorance which might well occasion surprise in these enlightened days, a certain author relates that the child was the son of one Pippin, an obscure jester, who found him in the core of an apple, and for several years dedicated him to the exercise of his own ignoble profession, from which he was only rescued by the death of his illiterate father.

Another romancer, with astounding audacity of circumstantial evidence, has dared to assert that he was shot forth from the clouds, bound to an arrow, and being picked up and adopted by an old Cobbler —a crooked little man, with a big head, and buckles to his breeches—narrowly escaped an apprenticeship to the Last.

A third mythologist, with a flippancy ill-befitting the narrator of so important an event, *suggests* that the great traveller was *probably* found

by the Elf Transformation in her Bag of Disguises; and from this flimsy shadow of a pretext, he goes on to evolve a long train of incidents that never happened, save in his own active imagination.

A fourth writer, with monstrous incredulity, laughs to scorn every tradition that has yet been published on the subject, and with an unparalleled perversity, that has found its reward in utter neglect, professes to believe that Tuflongbo never had any real existence at all, but that he was *invented* by Fancy, the famous Court Moralist and Story-teller.

But enough of these idle and contradictory fables! They are only such as mystify the origin of all those whose celebrity has excited the envy and vain emulation of their inferiors; while the tradition which I am now about to relate may be relied on as strictly authentic—being drawn up as it is from valuable family correspondence, and the lips of the famous traveller himself.

Tuflongbo was the only child of Mulberry, a distinguished member of the Royal Society of Wiseacres, and a scholar whose prodigious learning had raised him to the dignity of best authority on all disputed points of ancient and modern fable. Though no courtier or place-hunter, his profound reputation had earned him the honour of being

selected to impart the alphabetical elements of useful knowledge to the young Prince Goldheart, son of the reigning Queen of Sheneland; and it was during one of his official visits to his royal pupil that his beloved wife, the bright and fanciful Lupine, while wandering in the heat of the afternoon under the pleasant shadow of the garden trees, found their wee, drowsy dot of a baby fast asleep on the curled and crinkled leaf of a parsley-bush. A serviceable little fairy nurse sat over against him, fanning the rays from his face and singing a lullaby, while a perfumed zephyr hovered round the spray and rocked the quaint cradle in time to the tune.

Lupine leant over the unconscious child in loving wonder and awe; then she softly touched his dimpled cheek with her forefinger to try if he were *real*, and drew it away, smiling and more amazed than ever when he opened a pair of great surprised blue eyes that laughed as if they knew her. "Take him; he is not glass—he won't break," said the fairy nurse; "he belongs to you and Mulberry." And she was just laying the tiny darling into Lupine's tender arms, when the professor came swiftly along the green walk, and peeping through his clever spectacles over his wife's shoulder, exclaimed, "Oh, what a marvellous event! That is Tuflongbo, my blessed Lupine—

the son who is to be the crown and joy of our old age, as Oracle foretold when we were married! How proud and happy we shall be!! I must go and set the bells a-ringing!!!" And away he fussed, glowing with solemn delight, while Lupine sat down in the sunshine with her new treasure in her lap, and listened as the Elfin chimes tuned up from far and near in a joyous fantasia.

Quamoclit, the notorious busybody, had heard a whisper of something mysterious in the air, and meeting the flurried and gleeful Mulberry near his own door, she soon learnt what had happened, and before Tuflongbo was an hour old, she and the bells together had spread the news of his auspicious arrival throughout the length and breadth of Sheneland. The friends and neighbours then came with their congratulations in such numbers that the professor's house and garden were like a fair; and with beautiful resignation Tuflongbo allowed himself to be handed round to the guests, who all, as it were, took a sip of him, until the fairy-nurse was obliged to interpose and restore him to his mother, lest he should be quite kissed away.

The same evening, Mulberry called a select council of his brother Wiseacres, to consult with him over the future destiny of his son; and being assembled together under a cool arbour of vine-

leaves, with a fungus table to hold their tobacco-box, they lit their pipes, and, as the fragrant smoke curled up in clouds above their learned heads, they discoursed in scientific language on the propitious signs which had attended the discovery of the remarkable child.

"The sun was shining when he was born; therefore will he be of a cheerful, open, genial temperament," said one.

"It is summer; therefore will he be abundantly blessed of the flowers and fruits of fortune," said another.

"The time was afternoon; therefore will he live to grow old," added a third; but the sagacious and bulky Gourd—whose words carried as much weight in Sheneland as the prophecies of Oracle herself—held his peace, and puffed at his long pipe in thoughtful silence.

Mulberry anxiously waited for him to speak; but when he found that his venerable friend still continued mute and meditative, after the rest of the Council had given their opinions, he gravely inquired if he had been struck by any omen of evil that was likely to traverse the otherwise propitious lot of the child. Gourd replied that he had not, but with characteristic caution, before he would hazard any prediction as to Tuflongbo's future good or ill-luck, he required that he should

be produced before him for his conscientious personal study; and the babe was accordingly summoned from his mother's bower; and, being placed amongst the soft contents of the tobacco-box, for fear of accidents to his delicate limbs, the philosophers drew round the table, and proceeded to smoke their pipes over him while they took him into serious consideration.

Each Wiseacre was anxious to test the child's qualifications, with regard to his own peculiar hobby.

"Behold his length of foot,—the flatness of his great toe!" cried one. "My word for it, Mulberry, your son will be a famous traveller!"

"Remark the prominence and brilliance of his blue eyes!" exclaimed another; "he will assuredly be a ready, a shrewd, and just observer!"

"Note the length and straightness of his upper lip!" said a third. "He will be an orator, a humourist, and a wit!"

The sententious Gourd let everybody else have his say first, and then, with solid gravity, he pronounced his judgment to wind up.

"Your son is most richly endowed, worthy Mulberry," were his elegant words. "From you he inherits wisdom, from his mother imagination. He has courage also, and a large measure of

audacity; he will be enterprising, inquisitive, and self-reliant. Success must look on him with favour, because he will always woo her generously, frankly, and bravely. He will live to be famous, and to make his name of Tuflongbo known and revered from one end of Sheneland to the other!"

While the respectable Gourd spoke, the Council was held in admiring silence, but as the last syllable rolled sonorously from his lips, a cheer broke forth that rang through the garden, and penetrated to Lupine's bower, where she was anxiously waiting with the fairy-nurse, until her darling should be restored to her. At this ominous sound of merriment, they simultaneously remarked that they hoped the philosophers were not giving the baby anything that would not be good for him; and their fears being awakened, they crept stealthily out to the place of meeting, and, peeping into the arbour between the vine-leaves, they saw Tuflongbo still in the tobacco-box, and the Wise-acres smoking and talking over him as they would have done over any other natural curiosity.

The intelligent little fellow sat up staring at them alternately with wonderful discrimination and delight, until Blackcap Sycamore, who never lost an opportunity of trying an experiment, took advantage of the candour of the child's open mouth, and rashly popped his pipe into it; an

impertinence which Tuflongbo resented with a series of piercing cries that went to his mother's heart. When the trial was accomplished, the philosopher coolly restored the pipe to his own lips, observing with much pathos and regret—"Your son will never be a smoker, Mulberry; and that's a pity—a mighty pity! for tobacco is the only pleasure in life that never disappoints us!"

On hearing this abominable sentiment—which not a Wiseacre amongst them all contradicted—the fairy-nurse rushed into the midst of the solemn conclave, snatched the child indignantly from his comfortless lodging, and carried him back, still shouting most lustily, to the arms of the tender Lupine, who ran straight away with him to her dainty bower.

"There is nothing amiss with his lungs," then said Poplar, with serene composure; "and that is a satisfactory reflection for you, Mulberry."

Mulberry replied that the same thought had just occurred to himself; and the grand object of their deliberate consultation being removed, the philosophers filled their pipes again and began to talk of other things.

## II.

### THE ELFIN GIFTS.

THE following morning, Lupine, attended by the fairy-nurse, carried the child forth into the garden, and laying him down in his beautiful cradle, sat by it to watch and wait until the Elfin Things brought him their homage of gifts and graces, as the custom in Sheneland is. The sweet Zephyr, who had rocked him asleep the day before, then again floated over the spray where he nestled, causing it to undulate gently with the air of her gossamer wings, until the dreamy motion lulled him into a smiling slumber.

Then from their secret lurking-places in herb and flower, crept all manner of creatures, quaint and curious, and clomb up by stem and twig to admire Tuflongbo as he lay cozily purring on his curled and crinkled leaf. The fairy-nurse kept a shrewd eye upon them, lest any malign or hurtful thing should approach the innocent child to molest him; so that when Wasp came with a swift, exultant "whiz-z-z," to feed on the bloomy ripe peach of his sun-flushed cheek, she dashed him off with her palm-leaf fan; and when Gnat flew

circling round and about, with his stealthy "whirr-r-r," and his sting ready, she bade Zephyr leave the cradle for an instant and chase him away. But in that instant Tuflongbo awoke, and not all the rocking or lullabying in Sheneland could prevail on him to go to sleep again, when he saw the odd and comical creatures that were gathering to pay him their compliments; and very pretty it was to observe how he chirruped them a welcome, and laughed his merry thanks for the numerous gifts with which they enriched him.

First came Snail, with all his worldly goods upon his back, and after making him an oration on the wisdom of being contented in his condition, whatever it might prove, endowed him with his own fortune of little Pelf, less Care, and passed slowly by to make way for Spider, who reeled him off a silken thread to Hold-fast and Spin-true. Then came the bonny brown Bee, and gave him some of her Blitheness; and the Ant, who brought him a service of her Forethought and Industry; next followed the Beetle, who gave him a strain of his Courage; and the Locust, who offered him Speed and Strength on the Wing; and the Lizard, who furnished him with needful Craft; and many more besides, until Tuflongbo was gifted with all the every-day virtues that are in use in Sheneland.

When the Elfin Things had gone their way home again, which they did with much solemnity as soon as their mission was performed, the elemental spirits of Fire, Air, Earth, and Water, appeared, surrounded by their marvellous powers and terrors; but though Lupine hid her face, and the fairy-nurse cowered under his cradle-bush, Tuflongbo looked up to the sky, where a vast black cloud was gathering, with more wonder than awe. When it was at its darkest, suddenly it was rent asunder with an awful crash, and out of the dazzling splendour of its inner vault Lightning launched a flight of cloven spears, while Storm and Tempest raced down the Wind with a thousand hoarse voices of Echoes in pursuit. Then came swift legions of Showers that rattled, and railed, and pelted on rock, and sand, and mellow garden-ground, until all the trees, and shrubs, and herbs, and flowers that grew shed forth their uttermost perfumes; and the Gnomes that dwelt deep in the solitary caverns of the Earth issued thence with heaped-up baskets of gems and metals, and cast them abroad upon the soil.

Only a bit of iron fell within Tuflongbo's reach, but that he instantly seized in his tiny grasp and held it fast, though some invisible creature struggled with him for it passionately; and when the wild, elemental spirits had retired, and left all

calm again, it was still safe, clutched in his sturdy little fist. Then Lupine lifted up her face, and looked at it, hoping to find some glittering jewel or precious metal, but when she saw nothing but a dull fragment of iron-ore, she was disappointed, and murmured sorrowfully, "Not even gold or silver! He has drawn an iron lot, my darling, and must toil and trouble like his father before him."

"'Tis a good lot enough," said the wise fairy-nurse, to console her. "This is sterling metal, and if it be rough and homely he will have your fancy to gild it, and all his Elfin gifts besides. He seems highly delighted with it himself. Watch how he smiles as he bites it."

Lupine sighed, but she watched and smiled too, until dreading lest he might do himself a mischief, she tried to withdraw it from his mouth, when, to her exceeding satisfaction, she discovered that he had cut all his teeth, double as well as single, and his wise teeth too, upon its hard surface. Then his hair began to grow, and grew and curled over his round little head in a beautiful crop of chestnut curls. Next he stretched his queer short legs, which lengthened visibly under his mother's eyes, and yawned, and rolled over, and rolled himself out of his cradle upon the ground, when he immediately found the use of his feet, and to the wild

dismay of the frantic Lupine, of the fairy-nurse, and of Zephyr, away he ran; in and out amongst the bushes, over, under, and through the flowers, up and down, and round about, with all three of them after him, as fast as they could fly on wings of fear!

But they could not catch him. So swift was he, that he seemed to be in twenty places at once, and when Lupine thought she had him by the tail of his pretty coat, or the fairy-nurse got her fingers amongst his ruddy locks, in a twinkling he had escaped again, and was laughing at them from the topmost twig of a tree, or peeping, like the quaintest of little owls, out of some green ivy-bush far beyond their reach.

The chase was at its maddest, when home came Mulberry, and with him the bulky Gourd, the brave Poplar, and the inquisitive Sycamore, who immediately tucked up their dignity out of the way, and joined in it with the heartiest good-will, but also with much panting, and puffing, and shortness of breath. The sight of the famous Wiseacres in pursuit only appeared to urge Tuflongbo to more crazy pranks than ever, and it was not until Zephyr contrived to puff a cloud of clematis-powder in his face, which bewildered him, that he was laid hold of by the fairy-nurse, who tickled him into a fit of laughter by way of

punishment, and then carried him, kicking and struggling, to his mother's bower, Lupine following in a distracted state, while the Blackcaps gave him three cheers for his famous spirit, in which his father's voice was the loudest and most exultant of all.

## III.

### THE SALAMANDERS.

This wonderfully early development of Tuflongbo's adventurous turn of character brought with it, as a matter of course, the immediate necessity for training; and the little monkey having incautiously betrayed that he could *speak*, by asking for sugar to his bread and butter, after his long race in the garden, Mulberry and Lupine decided that it was high time to give their son regular instruction in the various duties and denials of life—a decision which a council of Wiseacres confirmed with universal approbation.

For seven fairy years his mother taught him by means of beautiful parables, taking for her text the flowers, the fruits, and the leaves, with which he was familiar, or the quaint Elfin Things that had endowed him with so many excellent gifts;

and throughout this period he was also steadily, yet imperceptibly, acquiring the practical lesson of pure and prompt obedience; and how firmly it was impressed on his ingenuous mind, let this incident of his temptation by the Salamanders testify.

Tuflongbo was sitting by the hearth one winter's night as good as alone; for Mulberry had fallen asleep in his chair, and Lupine, though she appeared to be in her usual place, was really gone abroad on a flight with Fancy into Dreamland, while the fairy-nurse was out on a gossip amongst her numerous friends and acquaintance. There was a fine fire of pine-knots frolicking up the chimney, and as Tuflongbo watched, he saw it wreathe, and twist, and curve, and coil itself into a thousand exquisite shapes which changed every moment, but all bent towards him and whispered in soft stealthy voices: "Come play with us, Tuflongbo, come play with us! See how merry we are, what sport we make!"

But Tuflongbo answered, with a shake of his wise little head, "Nay, I am forbidden to play with Fire!" and immediately the fantastic demons glided, some hissing, some laughing, into the deep red caverns amongst the pine-knots, and there lay, plotting mischief.

Presently, out from a smouldering chink flew

Spark and lit on Tuflongbo's coat; but he clapt his hand upon it, and crushed it to death, exclaiming, "You are only a small foe, Spark, but you are dangerous."

Enraged at this courage in the child, Flash then darted vehemently forth from a ruin of ashes, and endeavoured to strike him, but the wary little mannikin pushed his stool back and laughed in its face, as it retreated even more swiftly than it had sprung out of its lair. After this for a short time all was very hushed within. Tuflongbo heard the wind blowing in the garden, and now and then a shower swept against the window; but the sound was dreamy and soothing, and perhaps he might have fallen asleep within reach of his enemies, had they not been too eager to press on their temptations to leave him the chance.

For now a great log rolled apart from the rest, and out of the burning hollow rose Blaze and Flame, and towered up the wide chimney, and mopped and mowed, and danced and roared, and threw terrific shadows on the walls to frighten him; but Tuflongbo saw their weird, grotesque contortions quite undismayed. Baffled here again, the graceful serpentine reelings and windings began their maze once more, and, as if they were the least harmful of spirits, gently wooed Tuflongbo with dulcet songs and the same whisper-

ings as before. "Come play with us, come play with us! We are Salamanders, and have warmed thee many a cold day and frosty night. Where is thy gratitude, Tuflongbo, that thou wilt not join in our revels? If Blaze and Flame daunt thee, here are our merry Twinkle and sly Glimmer, and quaint Flicker—so prythee, come play with us, come play with us!"

"No, that must I not!" quoth Tuflongbo, sturdily, and drew farther away from his tempters. "You are beautiful and kindly amongst yourselves, but I am not akin to you and could not mingle without dreadful hurt in any of your sports."

"Thou dost not know us, Tuflongbo—we are the most beneficent of spirits!" cried Blaze in feigned astonishment.

"Yes, I know you—you are good servants and bad masters, and woe betide him who gives you the upper hand!" replied the child.

"Ah, ha! thou art a coward, Tuflongbo, thou art a coward, and *dare* not play with us," sneered Flame, with disappointed rage.

"Nay, I am no coward, though I am too prudent to burn my fingers wittingly," retorted Tuflongbo.

The Salamanders and Salamandrines at this laughed good-humouredly, and fell to their pranks

amongst themselves; and very quaint and fantastical these pranks were to behold. Tuflongbo watched them with a drowsy delight. Whenever a pine-knot dropt away, out flew myriads of Sparks, white and yellow, and red and violet, and chased each other in a mad gallop up the chimney; Blast driving wildly after them with a loud halloo! Then tiny, sportive Flashes leapt to and fro the logs, and glided like lizards down their crinkled bark, and peeled it off and ate into their hearts, until their bulk fell suddenly down in grey ashes on the hearthstone, where Glimmer and Flicker hid themselves in the ruins to keep warm.

This had happened twice or thrice, and still Mulberry had slept on and Lupine did not return from her Fancy-flight, or the fairy-nurse from her gossip, until, at last, the disappointed Salamanders had no more strength for their gambols, and were fain to supplicate Tuflongbo to give them fuel. But he distrusted them, whether in their awful might or their treacherous meekness, and refused; on which a spiteful little Twinkle peeped out at him and said, "If thou dost not, we will leave thee altogether, and then thou wilt be in the dark, ah, ha! ah, ha!!"

"Just as you please," replied Tuflongbo firmly. "My mother bade me never meddle with Fire for good or ill, and I must obey."

And there he sate, patiently waiting while the last Spark flew away; then Blaze, Flame, and Flash died; Glimmer and Twinkle survived them a short time, but at length they also sank exhausted, and a black log crushed them out. Only Flicker was now left, being driven to its final refuge amongst the embers. It looked up pitifully at Tuflongbo, and Tuflongbo looked down pitifully at it, but he could give it no help without breaking a promise to his mother; and shivering as much with sorrow as with cold, he watched the pleasant face grow fainter and fainter, until it vanished and was gone!

Just at that moment Mulberry awoke, and feeling shivery too, cried, "Oh! my blessed Lupine, we have dreamed the Fire out!"

Then Lupine rubbed her eyes, and descended from her Fancy-flight, and the fairy-nurse coming back from her gossip, brought flint, steel, and tinder-box, and tried to rekindle it. But, at first, it sulked and refused to catch alight, and it was not until after a good deal of coaxing from all who had neglected it, that it condescended to burn. Having puffed a volley or two of smoke in their faces, it seemed appeased, and then the antic Salamanders showed themselves again, as lively, frolicsome, and mischievous as before.

The vivid Sparks rushed up the yawning

chimney with many a twirl and caper; Flash laughed, Flicker winked, Twinkle danced, Flame roared, Blaze rioted, and Blast hallooed, until the merry Fire had warmed them all through and through, and little Tuflongbo, when he went to bed, was as nice, as crisp, and as hot as a toast!

## IV.

### TUFLONGBO'S ADVENTURES WITH THE ONDINES.

About six fairy months after his triumph over the Salamanders, Tuflongbo had another adventure to prove the metal of his obedience, which happened in this wise.

Being left in the garden alone one sunny afternoon, he climbed up by the wall, and looked out on the unknown world beyond with eager, wistful eyes of curiosity. On one side he saw the grey shadow-like spires, and arches, and towers of the chief city of Sheneland, with streets and houses clustered together, and continuous streams of people passing to and fro, and in and out, at the gates. But that busy scene did not much attract him. He knew that his father moved amongst it all day, and at night he saw him come home, often

so weary and dispirited, that even his beloved Lupine, with her happy fancies, could scarcely brighten his pale and care-worn face. On the other side, however, he beheld a lovely vision of delights; rich sloping meadows of emerald green, enamelled with exquisite flowers, spread away to the purple horizon, like waves of undulating turf; and through their midst flowed a river, that was *here* dark, still, and deep, *there* broken into foamy eddies and miniature cascades by the masses of rock that encumbered its bed.

In some spots its banks were open and sunny; elsewhere they were clothed with shady woods and avenues of trees that drooped over the water, sweeping their lower branches on its silvery, rippled surface. The whole prospect was indescribably sweet and pleasant; thousands of cool-breathed zephyrs fanned the sultry air about the river, while all day long Tuflongbo had languidly hunted the garden through, searching for the very tiniest sprite of all the gossamer tribe in vain. He longed to be out amongst those strange and fair fields and by the beguiling river, but never yet had he left the serene shelter of his father's house and garden, and he did not venture to do so now until he had asked leave of his mother.

He therefore descended from his look-out, and ran to her in the house, where she was busy mend-

ing the learned Mulberry's best black gown, and having told her his ardent desire, begged her to suffer him to go abroad into the beautiful meadows. Lupine gazed in his impatient face very wistfully for some moments, and then said, "Thou art growing taller day by day, my little son!"

"I shall never be higher than thy heart, mother," replied he, and leant his head against her bosom, and kissed her.

"Go," said she, with a voice of infinite tenderness. "Go! but promise me that thou wilt not venture into the river that flows amongst the fields. Thou art not yet strong enough to swim against the current, or even to steer thee a safe, straight course with the stream. Though it appear ever so laughing, or ever so tranquil, I bid thee beware of it!"

Tuflongbo promised, and with his mother's wise words of love and warning in his ears, sped away into the world beyond his home; rejoicing, yet half afraid, like a bird that for the first time plumes its wings in the infinite blue plains of heaven. He made direct for the river, that appeared, as he drew nearer, to roll under the sunshine like torrents of molten silver, and standing on the bank, watched the fickle Shadows reflected in it with admiring wonder. At first, it flowed with solemn, even course, but at length millions of

tiny waves crisped and curled on its surface, and Ripples innumerable laughed and danced down the tide, sparkling under his eyes, until he was quite dazzled and bewildered.

Then Foam, snowy white, swam on a swift eddy up to the bank, and lapt his dusty feet in her cool freshness, while Spray caught a handful of glistening drops, and dashed them like dew in his heated face. Hardly had he recovered from the delight of these pleasantries, than all at once he became aware of a queer little brown weed of a creature crouched on the top of a crag that just showed itself above the water. A cloak of ragged leaves was wrapt about his body, from below which dangled two stalky legs, finished off with knots of roots instead of feet. His head was shaped like a lily-cup reversed, the extended outermost petals acting as ears, and the centre one over his forehead terminating in a tiny horn. His features were indistinct, but his eyes were as brilliant as diamond-cut crystals, and twinkled with merry mockery while he sate making comical signs of civility to Tuflongbo from his slippery perch. He did not speak, or even open his mouth—indeed it was not clear that he had any mouth to open—but he was evidently anxious that Tuflongbo should join him on the crag, for he extended a hand to help him again and again, and a sly, pretty Ripple

whispered that he would find it one of the pleasantest, airiest seats in Sheneland at that time of day, if he would only try it. But Tuflongbo courteously declined the proffered hospitality, and walked away towards a group of trees, where the earliest shadows of evening were beginning to gather in robes of maize, and azure, and dun-tinted mist.

One of the most graceful and transparent of these lovely Shadows was brooding over the water intently, the long arm of a weeping beech being extended above her. Tuflongbo observed her from the distance, and, as he approached, his curiosity was excited to know on what her gaze was so earnestly bent. Drawing quite near, he still kept his feet from trespassing on the borders of her sad-coloured garments that swept the grass; and peering down below the beech-tree, where the river ran with a dark stillness, he saw the shape of two mysterious hands stretched up towards the light. As the veil of water flowed on and on, these hands seemed to clasp and unclasp themselves; to wave desolate farewells; to rise and fall, and rise and sink again, in vain, tremulous supplication; and as his eyes became accustomed to the restless gloom, he perceived further the outline of a drowning form. Just at the same instant, his weedy little acquaintance of the crag

came floating down-stream astride of a straw, and, catching at the reflection of a twig in the water, to stay his impetuous course, looked in Tuflongbo's face with an air of the most deplorable pathos, mutely entreating him to vouchsafe his help to the lost shadow struggling to escape from the river.

The kind little Fairykin's first impulse was to spring at once to the succour of the drowning mystery, but as he leant down towards it, it receded insidiously, and he saw that it was impossible to reach it unless he stepped from the bank altogether, and trusted to such insecure footing as the mossy rocks and stones of the current might afford; and this, by reason of his promise to his mother, he must not do. His distress was extreme; other aid than his was there none. The mournful Waif beat the air with its poor limbs, and its whole frame was twisted and contorted with agony when Tuflongbo intimated his helplessness by a sorrowful gesture of the head. The wretched thing then flung itself towards him and drifted to the bank on the lower side of the tree, as in a frenzy of despair, while the weird hands of the imprisoned shadow wrung themselves wildly together, and then burst asunder as if casting away their final hope of deliverance.

Tuflongbo's eyes were half-blinded with tears, and he could hear the beat of his own heart in the stillness as he stepped round by the smooth bole of the beech-tree, to try if his help might avail from thence. But no sooner had he done this than a sarcastic peal of laughter broke forth from the mocking Waif, who, gathering himself carefully together, backed out into the mid-current, looking so droll, whimsical, and mischievous, that Tuflongbo did not know in the least what to think of his vagaries; and turning bewildered to seek the drowning shadow, he saw only the curved and knotted roots of the beech-tree that extended themselves below the water with some faint, fantastic resemblance to hands! Then was he glad that he had not yielded to the temptation of a pity which would have led him into the delusion and snare that had been so artfully contrived to test his obedience; and singing gaily to himself, he ran along by the bank, while the waif, astride of its straw, and with its shattered cloak wrapped close, kept even pace with him on the river.

Evening was now drawing on, and twilight stole out of the woods with her thousands of thousands of grey-habited Shadows in her train, those in raiment of azure and rose, violet and gold, having disappeared one by one before the steady sweep of the sombre legions that precede the

night. Tuflongbo felt no dread of them, but he nevertheless presently turned towards home, and when he had gone about half way, he met his father coming out to meet him across the fields. The wise Mulberry first embraced his little son, and then encouraged him to tell him all he had seen and done since leaving his mother; and when the child narrated how the weed of a Waif had mocked him, when he discovered the dangerous falsehood of the Shadow in the river, the Wise-acre said—

"Now can I trust thee wholly, my little Tuflongbo, since thou hast courage to keep a hard promise, and wit to look at the two sides of an enterprise before undertaking it; for, in Shene-land, leading-strings of mothers are soon laid by, and each of us stands or falls, walks or wavers, according to the natural strength that is in him. Thy wings are beginning to sprout, and to-morrow thou shalt go forth with me into the city."

## V.

### THE PARABLE OF THE SPLIT REED.

When they reached home Lupine received the child with eager pleasure, and heard his adventures with enthusiasm, but when Mulberry told her of his intention to carry their son with him into the city in the morning, her heart was filled with a keen distress and anxiety. "He is so small and weak," pleaded she; but Tuflongbo craned himself up on his tiny tiptoes, and exhibited himself as if quite a formidable size for his age,—which was eight fairy-years precisely.

The fairy-nurse wagged her head, intimating her approval; and declared that he would be a famous mannikin by-and-by; and then she brought out a suit of proper little clothes, of a remarkably tight fit, but with plenty of pockets, and said that he must lay aside his childish coats on the morrow, and don these instead. Tuflongbo examined them with rosy delight, gauged the capacity of the pockets, and felt almost lifted off his feet with the idea of the sudden greatness that was coming upon him, when his father dropped a bright golden coin into the deepest, and said—"There, my son, is something for luck!

As long as thou hast that coin in thy pocket thou wilt never want for money." And it is stated by friends and foes alike, that having retained that golden handsel all his life, the celebrated traveller was never without ready cash and credit in any country whither his adventurous spirit led him.

Tuflongbo did not sleep much that night for thinking of what was to happen on the morrow, and at the earliest peep of day he was wide-awake, and up, and busy investing himself in his new clothes, that he might be prepared to set out as soon as his father called him. But Lupine was at his door first, and smiling and standing a little way off, she watched her son pranking himself with all the daintiness and vanity of a fledgling fairy; until he spied her and ran into her arms, where he forgot his unaccustomed finery in a moment, and allowed himself to be kissed and crumpled just as if he had on his childish coats again.

"I have somewhat to tell thee, Tuflongbo," said she, and leaning against her heart, and with his eyes on her ever bright and tender face, he listened while she told him this Parable of the Split Reed.

"On the marshy southern border of a moun-

tain lake, there once grew a tall Reed which lifted its head high above any other Rush of the Swamp. When the strong winds blew, it bowed and bent, and when they were still, it raised its crest again with as much majesty as before. Broad leaves, glossy and green, and sharp as swords, sprang from its root to the height of its shoulder, and then drooped downwards and outwards as in homage to their king. The meaner inhabitants of the morass held aloof from the stately Reed that towered above them by the crown, and enviously consulted amongst themselves how they might reduce him to their own level.

"'So long as he dips before the winds, and claims to himself no privileges greater than those of the tallest Reed in the swamp, he is safe,' said a shrewd Rushling to his emulous companions; 'but if by reason of his proud position he should become headstrong and wilful, *then* will follow humiliation, ruin, and a fall.'

"The Reed was, perhaps, aware of the feelings of his neighbours towards him, and being complaisant and kindly disposed, he endeavoured to moderate the haughty airs that had given them offence; but he could not lessen his stature, and though he bowed deeper than ever before the winds, and showed that he felt himself no stronger

or better than they, when the aërial spirits asserted a superior dominion, they refused to be propitiated; and declared that his pride increased day by day, and every hour his crown sat on his brow more arrogantly.

"The Reed, having a due self-respect, now perceived that the time was come to turn a deaf ear to the invidious remarks of his inferiors, and retiring within himself, held his own with calm dignity and easy grace. This serene behaviour could not fail to be exceedingly provoking to all those who would gladly have seen him abased; but a slimy snake-like little Rush, with guile and wickedness in his thoughts, crept to his feet, and kissing the ground before him, whispered humbly,—

"'Noble and generous Reed, deign to look on thy servant, and tell him why *thou*, who hast no peer, and art taller by the crown than any Rush in the morass, yet bendest thy lofty head to the imperious Winds, and renderest homage to the rude inclement Blasts!'

"'He who made us all, made them sovereign and me subject. I do but bow before my masters,' answered the Reed.

"At this the slimy Rush laughed with a slavish deference and said:—

"'Nay, my good lord, but thou hast too much humility! Wilt thou be a servant of servants who art king of all the Lake?'

"The Reed stirred uneasily on his throne of leaves, and turned his head about, and gazed abroad with a new sense of power awakening within him. The Rush went on:—

"'Survey thy realms, gracious Reed—look on all the multitudes that owe thee allegiance, and thou wilt feel that one so great was never made to bend, and bow, and dip before a Wind blown out of a Cloud!'

"'There is an Universal Law—each is under another,' replied the Reed, moved, yet hesitating.

"'True,' said the slimy Rush; 'but let each learn his place, and take it, keep it, and maintain it against usurpers for his own honour and the commonweal. Why should the noble crouch and the abject reign?'

"And then he slunk away, and from the depths of a black oozy bog, watched the effects of his flattering and deceitful words.

"The Reed began at once to lay them to heart, and to consider of his dignity and his meekness; and to argue within himself against the law that made him who dominated the Marsh render fealty to the vagrant Winds. Then resentful and dis-

satisfied feelings swelled in him mightily, and raising his proud crest higher than it had ever stood before, he made a vow to himself to lower it no more to any Breeze or Blast that blew. The slimy Rush saw the gesture, understood it, and chuckling inwardly, triumphed already in the disasters he foresaw.

"And that night there rose a Tempest that revelled wildly over the Lake and the Marshes, but the Reed, secure in his own sovereignty, set his neck firmly, and refused his due homage to the Winds! And they rent his crown from him, and cast it into the water; and broke his stately stalk from nape to heel, and dashed his brow into the mire, and made him lower than the meanest Rushling of the Swamp.

"And when morning dawned, there lay he,—bruised, crushed, and fallen; and as he strove to rise with a sad and shadowy dignity amongst the ruined leaves of his throne, there rang through the air a chorus of voices that taunted him with his humiliation; and the slimy flatterer, who had enticed him to his destruction, advanced and mocked at him with antic gestures of allegiance, and cried:

"'Thou art but a Split Reed! Come down from thy throne and lie in the dust; thou art a King no more, but only a Split Reed and a Ruler

without Discretion!' And the Reed fell along the earth and perished."

When the fanciful Lupine had made an end of her Parable, she embraced her little son, and looked intently into his eyes, to see if he had understood her. It was her usual practice to leave him to puzzle out the moral of her lessons for himself, and sometimes the inner light did not shine out until long after the pretty story had been told. On this occasion, however, she was earnest that he should take her meaning at once. Tuflongbo perceived this, and after a few minutes of thoughtful silence, during which he watched her countenance with awe and wonder at its inexpressible tenderness, he said,

"Mother, I will try always to wear thy counsels uppermost."

"They are counsels of love, my little son," replied she, folding him again in her arms. "Thou art leaving me for strange trials and scenes unknown. I can be no longer a shield and protection to thee, save by my words that thou mayst remember in hour of need. Be loyal; stand firmly by thy own self-respect; lend no ear to the opinions of base and envious persons; and turn away from the enticements of flattering tempters. There is a voice in every one of our

hearts will always tell us as much good of ourselves as 'tis wholesome to hear. Now, kiss me, my son, and go—there is thy father's voice calling to thee from without."

And Tuflongbo claspt his little hands about her neck, kissed her, and went his way.

# Part the Second.

## TUFLONGBO'S YOUTH.

### I.

#### IN THE CHIEF CITY OF SHENELAND.

Mulberry took his little son by the hand, and led him straight away towards the eastern gate of the city, which stood, white as an arch of foam, in a beautiful serene light and calmness. All the buildings hereabouts were large and noble, the streets were wide, the atmosphere was balmy and exhilarating. The green of gardens and groves appeared amongst the walls, and the music of innumerable birds, and falling waters of fountains, filled the air with a perpetual hum and harmony. Tuflongbo gazed around with wonder, admiration, and delight; and as long as he lived, never did he forget his first impression on entering the chief city of Sheneland.

The sense of strangeness and beauty almost bewildered him for a time; but, at length, he recovered his clear discernment, and then he found himself in the midst of other Fairykins like himself, all whose faces were set the same way as his own. Some had guides with them, and these appeared happy and well-cared for as they trudged steadily along; but others were alone, or banded in groups together, and amongst these Tuflongbo, new to the busy scene, saw most to observe.

There was one by himself, whose name was Larkspur, a merryandrew of a fellow, who, instead of walking orderly through the streets, turned head over heels, and performed all manner of antics, to attract the notice of the staider portion of the community—and it must be admitted that the staider portion of the community, though protesting against him, with a thousand sober airs, watched him, nevertheless, with furtive smiles of amusement.

Tuflongbo, who by nature gloried in anything queer and comical, more than once hung back from his father's hand to see what would be the end of his wild freaks, and he laughed with shrill shouts of glee when Larkspur, after climbing up a waterspout, flung himself boldly into the air, and, revolving like a wheel as he descended, plumped into the centre of a fountain, and achiev-

ing an elegant summerset amongst the falling showers of spray, bowed right and left to his acquaintance with his hand on his heart. They applauded him—they could not help it—and even Mulberry said he might be Harlequin to the Court!

The next who drew Tuflongbo's speculative eyes upon him was Chickweed, a little droll, who had a tangled clue of a puppy half smothered under his arm, a bird's nest in one pocket, and a top, marbles, string, toffy, and slate-pencils in the other. Besides a great rent at one of his knees, he had plasters of mud of divers colours ornamenting his clothes everywhere; and as he was going bareheaded, it seemed that he must have lost his cap. He had truant written on him from top to toe; and as he marched along whistling for lack of care, Tuflongbo's heart warmed to him, until, in a sudden expansion of feeling, he declared that he should like to go to school, if Chickweed went too; but Mulberry eyed the heedless wight with rather more severity, and remarked that he feared Chickweed was going anywhere but to school, if he might judge from appearances; and presently they saw him foregather with Larkspur, when the pair ran off in quite an opposite direction to that in which the distinguished Wiseacre was conducting his son.

When they were lost to sight, Tuflongbo felt quite sorry, but soon his thoughts were engaged by a cheerful little creature a year older than himself, whose name was Canary, and who was perseveringly conning his lessons as he walked along. Mulberry spoke to him with great kindness, and bade his son be friends with him; and thus introduced, the two Fairykins first took a long stare at each other, and then began to exchange personal confidences.

While they were talking, there came by, in a terrible fuss, the white-headed Chamomile, whose face was bitter with anxiety, but still full of energy; and when Canary hallooed to him to stop and tell them what was the matter, he replied that he had not time, for he was in a hobble again. He always was in a hobble, that luckless Chamomile, and hot water seemed to be his most natural element.

Proceeding straight on their way, they overtook Darnel, sauntering along with his hands in his pockets, lazy, lounging, ugly, and dirty. He made a grimace at Canary, and another at Tuflongbo; and when they were a few paces in advance, he flung a stone, which narrowly missed striking Mulberry on the head.

"Here, Tuf, hold my books!" cried Canary, firing up in an instant; and as the vicious Darnel

took to his heels, the cheerful little fellow gave chase, and though the other dodged and doubled, and turned and twisted, and ran like the coward and sneak he was, Canary persevered, and never gave in until he caught him and had administered such a proper allowance of cuffs as he had earned. He then rejoined Tuflongbo and his wise father, who in his absence had recommended him to his son as the best everyday companion he could have; saying that Canary was always pleasant and active, whether in work or in play, and so bold and persevering besides, that he was never tired or discouraged until he had accomplished whatever he began; and Tuflongbo was ready to admire him with all his might, for Darnel whom he had beaten was as big again as himself.

It now became clear that they were approaching that famous place of public instruction through which all the youth of Sheneland must pass before they are allowed to engage in any Elfin work or enterprise; for the scholars were greatly multiplied and the idle tykes had altogether disappeared. And at last they came in sight of it, standing on the shady side of the street, with three doors wide open, and a flight of steps up to each.

Tuflongbo's heart beat very fast, for his father said he must now leave him; and after a few words

of tender advice and of warning, he gave him a final embrace and disappeared. Canary then pointed to his new friend to go in at the lowest door, and sped away himself to the highest; and so the son of Mulberry and Lupine was left alone in the midst of a throng of strangers, who all eyed him with curiosity, and passed on to their own places in the class. He hesitated for some time whether to follow them or to run off and play, but at length duty overcame inclination; he found courage to mount the steps; and immediately he entered the building, he was met face to face by the mild Professor Parsley, who took him in hand forthwith, and trotted him at a brisk pace through the first lessons of useful knowledge.

Until this exercise was over, he had not a moment for general observation; but as soon as he was set free, he began to gaze about, and presently recognized the venerable and just Rudbeakia, the head of the college, sitting on his rostrum in the highest school. The experimental Sycamore and the bulky Gourd, his father's friends, were also there; and besides these, he saw another master, Hop by name, who appeared to be the dread of all his scholars, good and bad alike. At first, Tuflongbo could not understand the reason of his being so detested, for his coun-

tenance was sleek, and his manners of the finest glaze; but at length he perceived that he was *unjust*, and, therefore, whatever was most generous, honourable, and kindly in his scholars, revolted against him imperiously. Again and again were his decrees carried up to Rudbeakia and reversed, but at the next opportunity his conduct was as cruel and unpopular as before.

Tuflongbo trembled for the time when he should be promoted from the easy instructions of Professor Parsley, and placed under the rod of the remorseless and one-eyed Hop; and having been previously well-trained at home, this was not long deferred, but actually took place on the very first day of his arrival at the famous school. Hop received him with a politely sarcastic bow, bade him turn his toes out, and as he obeyed the command rather too literally, he got a smart stroke across his fingers, which made them tingle; but they tingled with pain by no means so much as his heart tingled with indignation against the smirking tyrant who administered the blow.

"Never mind," whispered a sharp little fellow, Mustard by name, who was illustrating the sum on his slate with hideous caricatures of the detested Hop. "Never mind, we soon get used to it here;" and Tuflongbo, to his sorrow, found the information only too correct; but he braced him-

self up and endured injustice with patient contempt, remembering how his wise father had warned him to expect many a rub and many a fall ere he could pass through the schools and become his own master.

Amongst Tuflongbo's contemporaries in Hop's class were several of those subsequently famous characters who engaged with him in his travels and adventures. Conspicuous on the upper form were Borage and Box, ploughing away at their lessons with the soberest diligence; as also was Mezereon, already distinguished by his courtly manners, and Sardony, by his cutting powers of speech. Tuflongbo's place was on the lower form, and his next neighbour was Larch, an audacious pickle, who played tricks under Hop's very nose; beyond him were Lychnis and Wild Sorrel, who could not refrain from jesting at their very intimate acquaintance, the awful rod itself, and a poor creature, one Betony, who, with his mouth open, and his eyes wide in chronic amazement, appeared to be the unjust master's prime favourite.

When the hour came to call over the names and dismiss the scholars at noon, Tuflongbo heard those of Bugloss, Dandelion, Fig, Juniper, Chamomile, Gooseberry, Chickweed, and Larkspur, who all answered to the roll distinctly—even Chickweed and Larkspur; and on looking round, sur-

prised at their presence, he saw them breathless at the entrance; Chickweed hiding the puppy behind Gooseberry, and Larkspur, with one foot inside the doorway and one out, waiting impatiently until his turn arrived, when he shouted "Tip-tap-toe!" like Stentor, and executing three perfect sumersets down the steps, disappeared from the astonished eyes and ears of the assembly.

Chickweed followed him more leisurely, and Tuflongbo, after searching for his cheerful friend Canary several minutes in vain, yielded to the natural impulse of his heart, and went after the heedless truant and the light-headed, light-heeled Larkspur, who accepted his company with every expression of welcome, and at once discovered in him a kindred spirit. They had not been together long before they were joined by Gooseberry in the liveliest state of expectancy; and this state of expectancy being highly contagious in Sheneland, they all caught it; and feeling sure that something wonderful must be on the point of happening, they determined to treat themselves to a holiday, that they might not risk missing it by being out of the way when it came to pass.

Chickweed then set to work to beguile the interval by teaching the puppy a new trick, and Larkspur practised a difficult rotatory movement that he had lately invented. Thus they two were

amused, and Gooseberry was sufficiently occupied in watching for whatever might turn up: but Tuflongbo, meanwhile, had to stand unemployed and idle. This kind of entertainment was far from satisfying his active mind, and after reflecting on his position for some time with ever-growing discontent, he said boldly, "I see no fun in *waiting* for adventures; why should we not go in *search* of them? Did you never hear of Ogres? Let us go down into Tanglewood and find an Ogre!"

This startling proposal was received at the first blush with mute amazement, but as soon as the three Fairykins recovered their wits and took it in, they burst forth into loud, ringing shouts of applause such as gave Tuflongbo a delicious foretaste of many a future triumph, and made his heart glow with honest pride.

"We must elect a leader," then said he. Upon which his companions with united voice proclaimed, "*Tuflongbo is our leader!*" Thus at once recognizing in him—a new comer amongst them—that talent for command which afterwards made him the chief pioneer of discovery, and the most successful traveller in Sheneland.

## II.

### TUFLONGBO AND HIS COMPANIONS GO IN SEARCH OF OGRES.

Tuflongbo assumed his dignity as leader with a suitable air of responsibility, and disposing his little volunteers in single file, set off towards Tanglewood at a brisk trot. Chickweed, who was familiar with every turn and twist of the way, acted as guide; and except when he was drawn aside from his duty by some web or nest dangling amongst the bushes, he fulfilled his office well.

There was no region in Sheneland haunted by so many marvellous legends and traditions as Tanglewood, and it was a masterstroke of policy in Tuflongbo to select it as his first hunting-ground for adventures. The road thither lay through the eastern gate of the city, by which he had entered with the wise Mulberry in the morning; and after keeping a direct course as far as the Enchanted Bower, turned abruptly southward, and, by a mossy green declivity, led into a maze of bushes and tracks, trees and streams, amidst which the shrewdest wight, not gifted with Elfin wit, would have lost himself

immediately on setting foot over the charmed border. But Tuflongbo and his companions crossed it fearlessly, and plunged into the labyrinth without a moment's hesitation.

It could hardly fail but that the little band should soon find itself scattered, and in anticipation of this event Tuflongbo selected and trimmed four whistles from a bed of reeds, and giving one to each of his companions, and retaining one for himself, he issued his orders that they should diligently seek, in every possible and impossible place, the Ogre they had come out to find; and that he who was first successful should announce his discovery to the others by blowing three blasts through his whistle. Commands so easy and precise as these elicited every promise of obedience, and the momentous business of the pursuit began with great demonstration and energy.

Tuflongbo set off swiftly down an alley of brambles, his little feet thrilling with the delights of liberty through every nerve. But when he had gained the limits of the path, and found a dense barrier of thorns stopping the way, he paused, and said to himself, meditatively, being alone, "I wonder what an Ogre is like?" And each of his dispersed followers was at exactly the same moment asking himself exactly the same question—"I wonder what an Ogre is like?"

They nevertheless persevered in the hunt, sure that they should recognize the monster as soon as he was found. But they contrived to combine amusement with duty, each according to his particular taste or inclination; that is to say, Gooseberry filled his pockets with nuts, and having engaged an obliging squirrel to crack them for him, seated himself quietly in a nice safe place, and with unwinking, watchful eyes, waited in exemplary patience until an Ogre should be pleased to walk by his retreat. Larkspur availed himself of the difficulties of the situation to practise his gymnastics, and forsaking the ground, climbed up into a lofty tree, and thence swinging himself from branch to branch, contrived to test the elastic bearing powers of a large district of Tanglewood. Chickweed prosecuted his investigations below, devoting his attention principally to hollow trunks, in which Ogres, as well as other things, might be supposed to live; but he only found some of the singular nests and hives of creatures that delight to build in decaying wood.

Tuflongbo alone maintained a single eye and a single mind towards the object of the adventure. His thoughts were full of Ogres, and of nothing but Ogres. Not one nut did he crack, not one caper did he cut, not one nest did he

take; and at last he was rewarded by hearing a most fierce and terrible cry that appeared to issue from the centre of a gigantic old oak, grown half over with ivy. He had a great struggle with his legs here not to run away, but his valour got the better in the debate; and let it be recorded to his immemorial honour, that he stood his ground and never gave way an inch—no, not even when the invisible thing shouted out with a lengthened halloo, "Tuwhit tuwhoo, tuwhit tuwhoo-o."

Tuflongbo raised his whistle to his lips, and immediately blew the concerted signal, to summon his companions. Larkspur arrived first, dropping down from a branch of the old oak itself; then appeared Gooseberry, throwing away his last shell empty; but Chickweed did not present himself, and dreadful fears for his safety began to trouble the mind of the leader of the adventure. He might have fallen in with another Ogre — who could say? Or he might have lost his whistle, and be unable to find it again. But all these anxious suggestions were put to flight by an instant and present peril which followed in the wake of another loud halloo, and threatened to overpower the endurance not only of Gooseberry and Larkspur, but almost of Tuflongbo himself.

In a densely dark hollow of the old oak, which was draped above and below and on either side

THE HORNED OWL OF TANGLEWOOD. p. 50.

with massive festoons of ivy, there suddenly appeared an enormous round horned head, with two big glassy eyes and a beak; and forth from that beak came one after another, in rapid succession, a perfect storm of shrieks—"Tuwhoo tuwhit; tuwhit tuwhoo-oo-oo-o-o!"

"We won't run away!" said Tuflongbo; "no, we *won't* run away!" But what temptations his brave little legs went through while he was bracing himself up to that splendid resolution, let those who have never gone in search of Ogres try to imagine.

Larkspur would have been glad to depart out of Tanglewood by means of his most rapid evolutions, and the expectations of Gooseberry were more than appeased by the spectacle in the ivy bush; but neither could prevail on himself to abandon the gallant leader to whose originality of character they were indebted for the adventure; and screening themselves partially behind his small figure, they awaited the issue, and longed for their still absent companion.

After a short interval to recruit his breath, the horned creature in the tree again broke out into his hideous melody. The young adventurers quaked from top to toe, and hardly would their courage have sustained them through this prolonged trial had not Tuflongbo said that he had

heard how music soothes the most savage beast, and desired his comrades to sit down and play a tune. So the three little Fairykins sat meekly down in a row, and played a tune on their whistles—all in quavers; not another note from beginning to end. And while they played, the thing with the glassy eyes, the horns, and the beak, was still and silent.

When they concluded, however, he broke forth into another halloo which might be interpreted either into applause, consternation, or anger at an incapable mimicry of his own song. And while they were discussing these three various views of it, Chickweed came sauntering up to them, his pockets stuffed out with all sorts of spoils of mosses and lichens, and eggs and nests, that he had discovered in his researches through the woods.

Of course his friends received him with exultant acclaim.

"We have found an Ogre! We have found an Ogre!" cried they as with one tongue; for a moment forgetting terror in triumph.

"Where is he?" asked Chickweed, looking round inquiringly.

"Up in the ivy-bush," replied they all, pointing at the horns, and glassy eyes, and beak.

"*That* an Ogre!—it is nothing but an *Owl!*"

laughed Chickweed, good-humouredly. And then he absolutely shouted, "Tuwhit tuwhoo, tuwhoo tuwhit!" so exactly like it that he might very well have passed for an owl himself.

Tuflongbo was much disappointed, and his countenance fell. But speedily recovering his spirits, he tossed up his cap, crying, "Better luck next time." And then he gave the word to march back to school again. And back to school again they marched accordingly, arriving just in the very nick of time to answer to their names when Hop called over the roll; and not having discovered their previous absence, he gave them a good mark apiece as diligent scholars.

But Rudbeakia had been more wide awake, and from him they received a special warning of what would happen if they ever again treated themselves to a holiday; and as Tuflongbo was a scholar new to the rules, he was brought before the just head of the college in person that he might be examined, and have the inevitable penalties of playing truant at once impressed upon his mind; which scene must now be described at length in another chapter as its importance demands.

## III.

### TUFLONGBO IS BROUGHT BEFORE RUDBEAKIA.

Rudbeakia wore the cap of justice when Tuflongbo was introduced into his presence by Bur, the monitor of the first class; but anxious not to dismay the inexperienced little culprit on his first appearance before him, he laid it aside, and displayed only his immense organs of benevolence, veneration, and firmness, which never created any alarm save in the consciences of Darnel, Bugloss, and a few others of that set, who were incorrigibly cruel, false, and foolish. It was, however, a very solemn occasion, and Tuflongbo experienced a deep feeling of awe as he found himself standing alone before the lofty rostrum, with the eyes of Rudbeakia gazing straight down upon him. A pause of profound and awful silence ensued, which was at last broken by the deep voice of the Professor, who asked Tuflongbo where he had spent the afternoon instead of appearing in school, as he ought to have done. Tuflongbo replied that he had been to Tanglewood.

"What to do there, Tuflongbo?" inquired Rudbeakia.

"I went to seek an Ogre," answered the Fairykin.

"And did you find one?"

"No." Another pause of profound silence here intervened, during which Tuflongbo, who had until now kept his eyes upon the ground, ventured to raise them to the countenance of Rudbeakia, and had such a levity been probable, he would have thought that just and majestic Wiseacre was *laughing*. But, of course, he was not; for the next moment he spoke again, and with some severity.

"You found no Ogre, Tuflongbo—where did you look for one?"

"I looked everywhere—amongst the nettles, and brambles, and thorns, and reeds, and rushes, and bushes, and trees, and stumps, and sticks, and stones—everywhere!"

"What do you believe an Ogre to be like?"

"Like an owl, with two horns, and two glassy eyes, and a beak, and a voice that halloos, 'Tuwhit tuwhoo, tuwhit tuwhoo-o-o!'"

Such unusual sounds issuing from the room of the Head Master caused several inquisitive persons to peep in; and amongst them was Professor Parsley, whom Rudbeakia beckoned to advance for a private consultation on the young culprit's affairs.

"Concerning this little son of Mulberry's, Parsley, how did he pass your examination?" in-

quired the great Don. Professor Parsley commended him as having passed it very creditably, and as being not at all deficient in useful knowledge—his years considered.

"He appears to be of an imaginative and adventurous disposition," said Rudbeakia. "He has been to Tanglewood to seek an Ogre. Who are his friends?"

Professor Parsley replied that they were Canary, Larkspur, Chickweed, and Gooseberry. On hearing this the Head Master dropt into a brown study, from which he only recovered to dismiss Tuflongbo with these memorable words—

"Tuflongbo, you have answered my questions without prevarication or excuse, in a brave and honourable manner, which has won my confidence and respect. You have evidently no turn for becoming a book-worm, since you make companions of Chickweed and Larkspur. It will, therefore, be essential for you to enjoy your liberty more frequently than others, and I shall now furnish you with a ticket-of-leave for the fine days, when you may prosecute your curious researches for Ogres in Tanglewood and elsewhere. On *fine days*, remember. When it rains you must answer to your name in school, or I shall be reluctantly compelled to introduce you to the severe Professor Discipline, who presides over

the morals and manners of this noble institution."

Having thus spoken, Rudbeakia bowed his head, put on the cap of justice, and intimated to Tuflongbo that he might withdraw; first handing him a ticket-of-leave, signed with his name and sealed with his seal. And exulting in the delightful holiday privileges it conferred, the little Fairykin scampered out into the streets in pursuit of his chosen companions.

He sought them up and down for ever so long in vain; but, at last, he hit on Chickweed, who was arranging his Tanglewood spoils in a quiet nook by himself. He was deeply absorbed in his occupation, and did not observe Tuflongbo's approach until his shadow fell across the retreat he had found, when he looked up, not too well pleased at the interruption, and asked what he wanted.

"I want to show you this!" replied the intruder, exhibiting his ticket-of-leave for fine days. "I have been before Rudbeakia, who has found out that I have no turn for becoming a bookworm, and so I am to enjoy my liberty, except when it rains. I wish you would beg him to give you yours, and then we could make such grand expeditions together, couldn't we?"

"He would have given me mine ages ago, but

my folks want me to be made into a Wiseacre, and I never shall—shall I, Snub?" said Chickweed, appealing despondently to the shaggy puppy which pressed its cold black nose to his cheek by way of answer and comfort. "I begin to hate the sight of a Black Cap, and as I cannot have a ticket-of-leave, I have made up my mind to play truant whenever I am inclined or have a chance!"

And then Chickweed went on picking over his mosses and lichens, and laying the various birds' eggs in little divisions of a box lined with wool, in a rather grieved and anxious way, as if he were far from being at ease in his mind, even while indulging his vagrant tastes. And no more he was; for his conscience was tender. But his enjoyment on the whole exceeded his pains and penalties, and so he went on his way, which was by no means the way that conducts to the Society of Wiseacres.

Tuflongbo felt an acute sympathy for him, and began to ask if Rudbeakia could not prevail on his folks to take a more just estimate of his genius and qualifications; but Chickweed shook his head.

"It is of no use," said he. "They wish me to be an honour to the family; and my old guardian is so unreasonable that if he took it into his head that I ought to be tall, he would hang me up

by the heels and tie weights round my neck to stretch me longer! And that would hardly be more silly than what he is trying to do with my mind: he has topsy-turvied it into the dullest confusion—why, Betony himself can beat me in school! I can't express to you, Tuflongbo, the shocking pain inside the very sight of an isosceles triangle gives me, or the anguish of fidgets I find in decimals and fractions. I am not so bad at maps or history, or even at poetry, if there is anything good in it; but I wish the monster who invented sums and problems had drowned himself off Asses' Bridge before ever he entered Sheneland! What I want to be is a naturalist—and they won't let me! That kind old Parsley is constantly telling me that I could learn all about these treasures of mine"—pointing to his mosses, lichens, and eggs —"in hundreds of books; but, as I say, what is the good of going to *hundreds* of books when I can find all I want to know in *one*—and that the best?"

Tuflongbo concurred with him entirely, and looked on with much interest until the persecuted little truant had finished his pleasant labours, when it was full time to go to bed. And so, with a sober good-night, they parted, and went their separate ways.

## IV.

### TUFLONGBO GROWS OLDER AND WISER.

On the morrow Tuflongbo went to school again, and continued to learn his lessons by book and by observation under the guidance of the unjust Hop for several fairy years. He saw the stupid Betony commended, and the zealous Box reproved, and Larch escaping well-merited punishment many a time. He saw Chickweed with a variety of triangles piercing his vitals, and the irritation of decimals and fractions oozing out of his swift toes when he ran off and played truant in Tanglewood. He saw Chamomile tumble neck and crop into a new difficulty every day, and he saw the courtly Mezereon bow himself out of all his scrapes with an elegant ease and a grace that was miraculous. He saw Sardony, Lychnis, and Wild Sorrel trip themselves up on their own smart tongues continually, and he saw Larkspur achieve a brilliant reputation by means of his light heels and light head, while plodding, studious scholars remained in obscurity.

When Tuflongbo worked, he worked with a will; when he played, he played with the liveliest energy and delight, growing every hour bigger,

better, wiser, and more popular amongst his school-fellows. On fine days he took his ticket-of-leave and went out into the woods to seek for Ogres, being sometimes accompanied by Chickweed, but quite as frequently venturing thither alone. It is not recorded, however, that his investigations were at this early period crowned with success, and the probability is that they were not; for a considerable time later, when he had been advanced to the upper school and placed under the instructions of Rudbeakia, we still find him pursuing the same arduous researches with unabated zeal; and as a proof how deeply the importance of Ogres was engraven on his mind, I may instance the numerous original designs of them which embellish his copy-books, still kept in a high state of preservation amongst those invaluable documents which enrich the chief Museum of Sheneland.

When the conversation of himself and his friends took a flight towards the future, and each said what he should like to be and to do, Tuflongbo's expression of his intentions was invariably the same—betraying that steadfastness of purpose, and that tenacity of grasp on his ideas, which were the main elements of his success afterwards.

"As soon as I have passed through the schools, I shall become an Adventurer," he would say. "I shall kiss my father and mother, and, with

a knapsack on my back and a staff in my hand, I shall set forth in quest of Ogres, and never shall I rest or return until I find one. They are not in Tanglewood, for I have sought it through and through; but somewhere they must exist, else should we not hear so much of them in our traditions. I shall make their discovery the sole object of my labours and travels, until it is accomplished; and for my companions in the journey, I shall choose Canary, because he is persevering and cheerful; Chamomile, because he is energetic in adversity; Larkspur, because he is light; Larch, because he is audacious; Gooseberry, because he is always on the watch; Mustard, because he never minds; and Chickweed, if his folks will let him go, because his knowledge of the queer things in woods and fields would be of immense service to the Expedition."

At this Chickweed would caress Snub, and shake his head despondingly; but all the other little Fairykins, delighted at being enrolled in the troop of such a leader as Tuflongbo was destined to be, received his orations with wild applause, and placed themselves under his orders for drill every holiday, until they had learnt to march in slow time, in quick time, and in double-quick time, and to practise all the other manœuvres requisite for keeping a band of adventurers in motion.

Tuflongbo once reviewed them before the whole school, and was commended by the just Rudbeakia for having brought them to so high a pitch of discipline; and those Wiseacres who had smoked their pipes over him and prophesied his future greatness on the day of his birth, began to point out to Mulberry and Lupine how their predictions were coming true already; and Tuflongbo's excellent parents rejoiced, and said he was indeed the crown and joy of their united lives!

## V.

### TUFLONGBO PUTS ON HIS CHAMELEON SUIT.

At last came the auspicious day when Tuflongbo was formally pronounced free of the schools. He passed with honour, carrying off many prizes, and immediately ran home to present himself before his tender mother and his fairy-nurse while the bloom of his dignity was fresh upon him. They flew at him with ecstatic kisses, laughing and weeping for joy; but when the ardour of their welcome was over, they retired a few paces off, and contemplated him with eyes of woeful, melting reproach.

"What have I done?" asked Tuflongbo, greatly dismayed.

"Look at your pretty new suit!" cried the fairy-nurse; and obeying her directions, he saw a long rent down the side of one leg, and a crack across the other knee, besides relics of brambles and thorns sticking out of little splits everywhere. "'Tis a pity you cannot see yourself behind, too!" added she, and spun him round, back front, to the grieved Lupine, who, perceiving that he was covered with mud and dust, knew that he must have had many a tumble, and perhaps many a hurt, since he left her, which instantly turned all her feelings into the current of sympathy.

He declared, however, that he was not hurt. So the exemplary fairy-nurse brought a hard brush, and tried to brush him clean, to his very great discomfort; after which ordeal he was put to the question as to how he came to be in such a desperate pickle from merely going to school. He explained, in a straightforward manner, how, on his first introduction there, he had treated himself to a holiday with three choice companions, and had gone to Tanglewood to seek an Ogre, when, probably, the worst rents in his pretty home-made suit took place. At this confession, Lupine looked grave; but on hearing that the just Rudbeakia had afterwards given him a ticket-of-leave for

fine days, she was satisfied, and smiled again;—at first she had begun to fear that her son had proved himself to have no more discretion than the Split Reed.

Just at this moment, in came Mulberry, and embraced Tuflongbo on his promotion to independence after passing through the Schools. He did not notice his tattered clothing, but the fairy-nurse felt it her duty to call his attention to it, and to ask what he thought of such rags.

"Clothes are of no importance; he must enjoy the free use of his limbs. He has outgrown these now; and, besides, I saw they were already too tight when he put them on ten years ago," was the Wiseacre's indulgent reply.

"Too tight! when his mother and I made them ourselves!" cried the fairy-nurse, with much indignation.

"Yes; it was their only fault," said Mulberry, with grave decision. "But they have worn very well, therefore be not disquieted; I will provide him with a new suit myself to-morrow."

"And they had better be made of leather," returned the fairy-nurse, and entrenched herself in silent reserve for the rest of the evening.

The next day the wise Mulberry took his son by the hand again, and led him into the straight street that runs through the midst of the Chief

City of Sheneland, crossing it in a direct line from east to west. This street contained many gay stalls of goods for sale, and Tuflongbo's eyes were especially attracted by the wares which two traders, named Specious and Plausible, displayed in showy lines along the front of their dwelling. These wares were masks, modelled to represent all the virtues, excellences, and graces that embellish the Fairy character, and were, in many instances, very tolerable likenesses of what they mocked, save that they had a uniformly disagreeable expression of being overdone.

Tuflongbo was, however, scarcely shrewd or experienced enough to detect this at the first glance, and thought some of the faces so pretty that he wished to stop and look at them. The sagacious Mulberry made no remark, but permitted him to do so; and Tuflongbo was satisfied after a very short survey, saying, of his own accord, that the masks were none of them so nice as his mother or his fairy-nurse, though they seemed very pleasant and smiling a little way off. Then Mulberry told him he had come to a just conclusion; any wares manufactured by Specious and Plausible were sure to be trash, and as they could only be bought and paid for with false coin, no honest or true people ever engaged in dealings with them;—and yet, from the number of persons

hanging about their stall, they seemed to drive a pretty considerable trade too.

Passing forward to some distance beyond the mask-sellers, they presently paused again before the open window of a Cobbler—a crooked little old man, with a big head, and buckles to his breeches — who was hard at work at his last, making a pair of square-toed, double-soled shoes, with nails in the heels. He looked up as the shadow of Tuflongbo fell across his board, and nodded good-humouredly, saying, "I have been expecting you, Tuflongbo; I know what you want —a new suit and new shoes, and your shoes are nearly ready. Come in."

So Tuflongbo went in; and, as soon as the last nail was set in the heels of the square-toed, double-soled shoes, he was bidden to put them on, which he did with a proud satisfaction.

"They are strong, they are comfortable, and they look as if they would last," said he, complacently.

"They will last until you have no more need of shoes," said the Cobbler; and then he made the Fairykin stand erect, that he might take the measure of his height, his breadth, and his girth, for his new suit: and this he did, talking to himself thus musingly all the time.

"He is but a tiny Fairykin, this son of Mul-

berry's, yet he is destined to be a famous traveller, and to go through marvellous adventures; therefore, we will make him a suit for use, rather than for beauty; of sound stuff, and sewn with best waxed thread. This of home-make is very good as far as it goes, and the pockets are highly commendable, but it could never stand the wear and tear his clothes must be prepared to go through. He is not handsome, but his figure is light, active, and clean-limbed,—shaped for great enterprise and endurance."

Tuflongbo listened to the Cobbler's murmured reflections with profound interest and delight; he did not care a bit for hearing that he was not handsome, for he knew that he had a good square nose and chin, and a complexion that weather would not spoil—much more serviceable personal properties to an adventurer than a rosy-red and snowy-white beauty, such as is the fashion at Court.

When the old Cobbler had got his measures all right, he began to consider of the buttons for the new suit. "Now for the buttons; what shall the buttons be?" said he, thoughtfully. "Buttons of caution, prudence, pleasantness, or what?"

"If it would be convenient and becoming, I should like to have one of each," interposed Tuflongbo, modestly.

"You would like to have what we call a set of harlequin buttons," said the Cobbler. "Very well; so shall it be—harlequin buttons, and trimmings to match. And I daresay you will limit your luggage to a knapsack and a walking-stick? Yes—in that case a suit of chameleon-cloth is the thing. Clad in that, you will have a change for all weathers, and a costume appropriate for all occasions."

And thus was it finally decided. A suit of chameleon-cloth, with harlequin buttons, and trimmings to match, was to be Tuflongbo's travelling garb; his shoes being square-toed, double-soled, and with nails in the heels. He was further provided with a cap having a broad brim and a belt round it, but no jewel or feather for mere display; with a leathern knapsack, small, yet convenient, and with a staff which had a mountaineer's spike at one end and a crook at the other.

It was far from being a splendid costume, but it had many excellent and serviceable qualities. Tuflongbo was satisfied with it himself, and Mulberry gave it his complete approval; so the magical tailor-machines were instantly set to work, and in a very few minutes the Fairykin stood fully equipped for his life of adventure. The Cobbler then bade him transfer his father's gold coin from

the pocket of his worn-out home-made suit to that of his new chameleon coat; and this being done, he wished him good luck wherever he might journey; and Tuflongbo returned with Mulberry to exhibit himself to his mother and the fairy-nurse, who said his clothes were very well put together, considering they had had no hand in making them.

And the same night the Wiseacre gave an entertainment to his son's young friends, to celebrate his coming of age and the putting on of the chameleon suit.

## VI.

### TUFLONGBO PERFORMS A GREAT STATE SERVICE.

It was just at this period that a very remarkable and important event was being daily expected and looked for in Sheneland. It may, perhaps, be necessary to state, for the information of such persons as are not deeply read in Shenelandic History, that there is an ancient law in the Country beyond the Moon which prohibits the accession of males to its throne. The Fairies will have none but a Queen to reign over them.

Tuflongbo was born in the reign of Queen Russet, who had one son, Prince Goldheart, but no daughter to take her crown. She was now growing old and weary with cares of State, though a successor was as yet unprovided. In this emergency, many cabinet councils were called to take the matter into consideration, but without result. Oracle was then appealed to, and she only repeated what she had said many times already—namely, that the nation must have patience and live in hope—a fair Princess, good and beautiful, would in due time be found for Sheneland; and with this renewed assurance all were content to wait.

While the promised event was still hanging in the balance, many speculations as to its prompt or remote fulfilment were hazarded; and it need not be an occasion for surprise that now and then such speculations were mentioned in Tuflongbo's hearing, and naturally awakened his loyalty, his curiosity, his ambition, and his spirit of adventure.

Oracle had proclaimed that when the royal Princess was found, she would be recognized by a star of brilliant dewdrops on her forehead; and it straightway occurred to Tuflongbo that the glorious mission of her discovery might be reserved for him. By dint of dwelling on the idea and turning it over and over in his thoughts, he

at length became assured that it was so; and one splendid, sunshiny morning, he took his staff in his hand, and went down alone into the labyrinth of Tanglewood to seek for his future sovereign and mistress, by the appointed sign.

Let it not be imagined that Tuflongbo, in cultivating the peculiar inclinations of his genius hitherto, had learnt nothing but the arts of adventure. Though in all active exercises he was as skilful as Larkspur himself, and second only to Chickweed in his acquaintance with the ways, customs, and capacities of wild creatures, he also possessed a varied and extensive knowledge of Shenelandic literature, which knowledge was now a mighty help to him in seeking the Princess.

He had read in history how, when, and where previous Queens of his country had been found; and, passing by all lowly herbs and noxious plants, he hunted diligently in rose-cups, lily-bells, and other kindred places, but for a long while without success. He was not discouraged, however; and as the day grew to noon, and the heat increased, he went into a cool and shady thicket near the Enchanted Bower, where trickled a bright rivulet, and there lay down to rest and sleep, that he might renew his search with fresh vigour when the glowing sun became rather less powerful.

How long he slept he never knew, but he was awakened suddenly by the soft, low melody of bells; and, raising himself on his elbow, he looked round with ever-gathering wonder and admiration as the Elfin chimes swelled louder and merrier through the sunny air. At the distance of scarcely three paces there rose a graceful flowering fern, that swayed gently to and fro, fanned by the wings of a multitude of delicate Zephyrs. A solemn and stately little Fairy sat by on one of the tallest leaves, keeping watch like a nurse; and when Tuflongbo gained courage to approach and look at her charge, he saw a beautiful fair little creature laid between two airy blossoms of the fern, with a brilliant star of dew-drops on her forehead, and gossamer robes of regal tints wrapping her dainty, delicate form.

He uttered an irrepressible exclamation of delight, when immediately the solemn little Fairy who kept watch nodded her head at him and announced, "I am Mother Dignity, and this is Princess Osmunda, your future Queen!"

Tuflongbo knew it already, and clapt his hands with enthusiastic congratulation, while the chorus of the bells rose into a joyous clamour, and all the Echoes whispered far and near, "A Queen is found! a Queen is found!"

Thus was the news of the long-expected event

carried to Elfin Court, and instantly a royal procession set out to receive the Princess and carry her in triumph to the palace. Queen Russet appeared with Prince Goldheart, and all the chief officers of State around her; and being come to the Flowering Fern, where the young Princess lay airily cradled by the Zephyrs, she recognized her forthwith as her successor, and the accustomed homage was at once paid to the little Star-crowned Maiden.

Tuflongbo had never been in such radiant company before, but he maintained his self-possession undisturbed, and it was remarked by many that when the beautiful new Princess opened her serene blue eyes, *his* was the first face on which they rested. Singular to relate, she shrugged her plump little white shoulders, and crowed and chuckled, as if she recognized something very funny and very pleasant in it; and from that moment may be dated the respectful devotion and attachment which the famous Traveller manifested in the service of his beloved sovereign.

Queen Russet personally acknowledged her obligations to Tuflongbo for the great State service he had performed in discovering the Princess who was to succeed her; and, after the settlement of a few necessary preliminaries, the procession prepared to return to Elfin Court, he being

graciously invited to accompany it and to take part in the festivities and ceremonies of the Coronation.

## VII.

### THE CORONATION OF QUEEN OSMUNDA.

These festivities and ceremonials were extremely grand and gaudy. The royal pages and Court officials were dressed in gorgeous new suits, as also were the Knights Fairy selected to form Queen Osmunda's guard of honour, and the fair bevy of Elves chosen to attend on her person. Muffin, master of the ceremonies, came out very reslpendent in a complete tight fit of azure decked with stars; Grand Pomp, his assistant heralds Trig and Tart, and the trumpeters, were all provided with fresh golden reeds and banners of brilliant poppy silk. But the gayest amongst the gay, and the merriest amongst the merry, was still Tuflongbo, in his changeable, chameleon suit, which was green in the morning for the hunt, scarlet at noon for the feast, and rainbow-hued, frosted with silver at night for the dance.

One of the most important personages who graced the Coronation was Mother Dignity, now

elevated to the responsible office of Mistress of the Robes to Queen Osmunda; and to her favour and countenance it was that Tuflongbo owed much of his entertainment at Court; but for her kindness, by reason of the etiquette which fenced round the solemnities of the Coronation, he might have been quite lost in the crowd, notwithstanding his distinguished national service.

The festivities opened with a magnificent ball on the evening of the Princess's discovery, she looking on from the lap of Queen Russet with wonder and admiring delight. Prince Goldheart and Prince Glee figured away elegantly on this occasion, and Princess Trill threw all the Court into ecstasy by singing a song after supper in honour of the new Queen. The next day there was a grand chase in the forest, when dog Worry signalized himself so valorously that he was elected captain of the Queen's kennels by the unanimous consent of his companions. After the chase there was a hunting feast, and after the hunting feast there was a concert of sylvan music, and after the concert of sylvan music there was a most comical pantomime to finish up the night, which sent everybody to bed aching with laughter; but the following morning all the fashionable world of Sheneland was astir betimes to take part in the honours and glories of the Coronation.

Not a bell on hill or in dale but was ringing and ringing its loudest; not a little bird on bough or in bush but was carolling and carolling its sweetest; not a playful Zephyr floating in the air but carried the tune of good news to the remotest corner of the land. Tuflongbo had never before felt so happy or light at heart as he did on that memorable day of days!

The royal procession formed at noon precisely, and passed into the Grand Hall of the Palace, where the ceremony was to be performed. Grand Pomp took the lead, bearing the proclamation, written out in letters of gold upon white satin, and having the seal of State attached to it. Trig and Tart supported him on either hand, and immediately behind followed the trumpeters with their trumpets, ready to blow a blast as soon as the concerted signal was given. Down each side of the hall were ranged, three deep, the Court officials, according to rank; the centre being kept free for their Majesties and immediate attendants. Expectation was on tiptoe, and Tuflongbo, who had had a place appointed him near the chief entrance, was listening, breathless, for the first note of the coming of the Queens, when Solemn, the Lord Chamberlain, and Muffin, Master of the Ceremonies, flung wide the doors and strutted in, shouting, "Homage to her most gracious Majesty

Queen Russet!" And everybody bowed low thrice, as she walked up the hall to the dais whereon stood the throne. Having reached it, she paused and looked round on her faithful subjects with wan yet tender eyes; then waited until again the voices of Solemn, Lord Chamberlain, and of Muffin, Master of the Ceremonies, announced, "Homage to her most gracious Majesty Queen Osmunda!" And the fair young Princess appeared, followed by Elf Transformation and a most brilliant Court.

Immediately then the trumpeters blew three resounding blasts, and, as they died away, Grand Pomp stood forward and read aloud the style and title of both Sovereigns, challenging any there present to dispute the rightful claim of Queen Osmunda to the crown of Sheneland as successor to Queen Russet. An unbroken silence for the next five minutes pervaded the hall, during which Elf Transformation, with her magical wand, gently touched the brow of each Sovereign; whereupon all beheld Queen Russet lift from her own head the royal crown, and place it on that of Queen Osmunda, who knelt before her with eyes meekly veiled.

While this solemn act was being done, a slow strain of music filled the air, and Tuflongbo covered his face, as did the rest, feeling, he knew

not why, inexpressibly sad. It continued for some time, dirge-like and dreary, but gradually changed and swelled into notes of triumph, and, looking up once more, he beheld Queen Osmunda seated on the golden throne, bearing the sceptre, but the discrowned Queen was gone. Prince Goldheart, her son, stood at the Sovereign's right hand, and Mother Dignity at her left, the Royal Pages and Maids of Honour being grouped behind on the dais.

Queen Osmunda having again received the homage of her subjects, then proceeded to exercise her royal prerogative of granting honours and favours to all who had any request to prefer, each person being presented to her by a responsible official of the Court. Mother Dignity herself brought forward Tuflongbo's claims, and, with a smile of the most winning kindness, Queen Osmunda asked what boon he would best like to receive at her royal hands.

Without a moment's hesitation, he replied, "Let me be your most gracious Majesty's devoted traveller and adventurer."

"Your petition is granted, Tuflongbo!" said the Queen. "Be loyal and brave, and may every success attend on your enterprises!"

The delighted Fairykin bowed low, with his hand on his heart, then drew back from before

the throne; and this same evening, having received his commission, signed by the Queen's hand and sealed with the seal of State, he took his leave of the Court and its splendours, and returned to his father's house to prepare for his great journey.

# Part the Third.

## TUFLONGBO'S GREAT JOURNEY.

### I.

#### THE FAREWELL FEAST.

When Tuflongbo had received his credentials, and had been proclaimed Queen Osmunda's adventurer throughout the length and breadth of Sheneland, he rallied his chosen and disciplined friends around him, and commanded them to make ready for a speedy departure on a great journey in search of Ogres. Then, according to an immemorial custom, the wise Mulberry and the tender Lupine called an assemblage of the acquaintance of the family, both old and young, and gave a splendid entertainment to celebrate their son's launch into his life of travel and adventure.

Rudbeakia and Parsley, Gourd and Sycamore, arrived amongst the earliest guests, bringing their

best compliments, their best appetites, and their best pipes to smoke after the feast. Next appeared Chickweed, wearing a short gown and a black cap; for he had just attained his first degree as a Wiseacre, much against his will, and had been obliged to take his name off Tuflongbo's drill-list in consequence. He looked exceedingly dejected and untidy, having barely allowed himself time to dress, and when he presented himself amongst the dignified elders of the Society to which he now belonged, they received him with coolness, and made whispered comments on his negligence, saying that he was hardly respectable, with his black cap hind-side before, and his gown already torn in half a dozen places. Snub was with him; no longer a tangled clew of a puppy, but a serious-minded dog, profoundly devoted to his master's service and consolation. Wild Sorrel came next, also wearing the cap and robes of a bachelor Wiseacre; and as it was his first public appearance in that character, and he supported it in a superior manner, Gourd solemnly congratulated him. Wild Sorrel made a precise and punctilious reply to the bulky ancient, being anxious not to shock his feelings, but a few minutes afterwards he was overheard whispering to Chickweed, "I wish I were going off on a search for adventures with dear old Tuf; and don't you, Chick?" To which

Chickweed responded with a mournful "Ah, yes, indeed!" and shook his head over the sympathizing Snub.

The miscellaneous company now poured in fast, and when they were all seated the hero of the day, who had hitherto kept himself in the background, came forward, leading his chosen band of adventurers, who were immediately recognized with three cheers a-piece — as the persevering Canary, the energetic Chamomile, the light-heeled Larkspur, the audacious Larch, the expectant Gooseberry, and the reckless Mustard—perfectly disciplined, fully equipped, and in the very best of good spirits.

Everybody drunk their health and wished them luck; and when they took their places at the board they were served with the choicest delicacies,—some inconsiderate guest observing thereupon that it would probably be a long time ere they again sat down to such a feast as was now spread before them. But the ardent adventurers refused to allow such a thought to damp their present enjoyment or future hopes, and acquitted themselves towards the dainty viands like hungry heroes proof against every emergency.

The conversation very naturally turned on the object Tuflongbo had in view for this, his first great journey—namely, the discovery of Ogres;

and several of the elders had anecdotes to relate concerning their peculiar ways and customs, gathered either from their own personal observation or from the legendary lore of their progenitors.

Rudbeakia remembered seeing one in the wilds of Nod when he was very young, and described him as altogether fearsome and appalling—saucer-eyed, wolf-toothed, and so ravenous that fifty plump little Fairykins were barely enough for his supper. Gourd had heard of another, who carried his head—and that a very ugly one—under his arm, instead of wearing it on his shoulders, in a seemly and proper manner. Then Wild Sorrel lifted up his testimony, and gave some most remarkable evidence on the matter. He stated that his fairy godmother, who was a hot-tempered person, was always in the habit of threatening, when he was naughty, to throw him to a horrid Ogre of her acquaintance, named Squintaskew. The witty Lychnis here interrupted him, and begged to be informed how it was, then, that his frolicsome friend had escaped, and sat there amongst them in safety at that moment. To which Wild Sorrel, settling his cap of Wiseacre more firmly on his head, replied with great dignity that though his fairy godmother frequently threatened him with this penalty, she had never executed it—and why?

Because he was so excellent and beautifully-behaved a Fairykin that Squintaskew would himself have rejected him as *far too good to eat!*

Lychnis, Sardony, and two or three other intimate friends of Wild Sorrel, laughed incredulously at this assertion, and the young Wiseacre, indignant at their want of faith, immediately offered to *prove* it—and to prove also that all who did not believe him were neither more nor less than whiffs of tobacco smoke!

The discussion seemed verging on a quarrel, for Wild Sorrel had mounted on his chair, and raising his gown with one hand in a legal bunch at the small of his back, while he extended the other in an elegant oratorical attitude, was preparing to address the assembly, when the courteous Mezereon pulled him down, and whispered that Lupine and Elves were present. Thus recalled to good behaviour, he dropped hastily into his seat, lashing out a final argument at his opponents to the effect that they could not *prove* that they were *not* whiffs of tobacco smoke, when Tuflongbo closed the discussion by quoting in an airy manner a bit of that proverbial philosophy which he had acquired under the instructions of the just Rudbeakia—

"A fool," said he, "can deny more in an hour than a thousand Wiseacres can prove in a

thousand years!" a remark that was welcomed with loud acclamations by old and young.

Perfect harmony was then restored, and the pleasantness of the celebration was not again broken.

When the feast came to a conclusion, Lupine withdrew to her bower with her friends, and Mulberry lit his pipe of wisdom as a signal for the rest; whereupon a vast cloud was blown, on which Tuflongbo was exalted to the skies—all his chosen companions coming in for a share of praises too. Meanwhile, the future travellers took leave quietly of their friends, regretting much that Chickweed was not to be of their band; for his distress at being unable to go on the great journey was most touching and pathetic to witness. Wild Sorrel at length kindly undertook to prove to him the folly of regret, and carried him off for a walk into the garden, and there presently left him very happy in an old crow's nest. On coming back with this consoling report, Tuflongbo embraced his legal friend, and said he wished he could have numbered him in his company; to which Wild Sorrel gracefully replied, "Never mind, Tuf, some of us must sacrifice our inclinations to the public good. Fun is my element, and, between you and me, I believe I shall find many openings for practical jokes in the law.

Good-by, old fellow, and good luck to both of us, for I am sure we shall deserve it!"

It was now drawing towards the hour which Oracle had mentioned as the most propitious for the adventurers to set forth on their travels; so they shook hands all round. Tuflongbo took a tender farewell of his father, his mother, and the fairy-nurse, and, lest his feelings should be too much for his control did he linger, gave an immediate order to march.

And away they marched in slow time, the song Canary sang almost drowned in the volleys of cheers that pursued them. Hurrah! Hurrah-ah!! Hurrah-ah-ah!!!

## II.

### THE WEEDY LITTLE WAIF OF THE CRAG.

The band of adventurers never looked back once, but marched steadily forward towards the chief city of Sheneland, up the straight street running through its midst, and out by the Spring Gate, which rose like a rainbow arch of hope and promise in the serene blue air. Many groups and single persons were pressing forth into the open country besides themselves, but they kept well

together, and were presently left alone on a south wending track, which, after crossing a beautiful, undulating meadow-plain, ran along by that river where Tuflongbo had his adventure with the Ondines. Being come to the spot on its banks where grew the weeping beech-tree, he called a halt of his followers, and after detailing his own temptation and narrow escape, warned them not to be drawn aside from the path by any allurements, obstacles, or dangers that might offer themselves.

"Beyond this point," said he, "all is as much unknown country to me as to you. I have found no chart of it, nor so much as a guess at its natural history anywhere. Be ready, therefore, and on the watch for whatever may happen; for I should die of shame were it told in Sheneland that Tuflongbo led forth adventurers in quest of Ogres, and was himself taken by stratagem unawares!"

His comrades answered with a shout that they would be prompt to do their duty, and ready, ay, ready, to follow their leader whithersoever he might choose to go; and with this cordial assurance of goodwill to support him, Tuflongbo stept out gallantly once more, and they continued their march by the river until nightfall.

It would have been wise had they stopped then, and bivouacked till the morning; but their ardour

was such that they must needs hurry onwards, stumbling often in the gloom, and wearying themselves quite in vain as it proved; for, after tramping through the darkness, when dawn broke they found themselves at the foot of the beech-tree where Tuflongbo had called his first halt, not having made the least progress during all those long hours of night marching! From this it was evident that they were already come to enchanted ground.

About a stone's throw from the bank, perched on his crag, sat the quaint little weedy Waif, making his toilette airily in the morning breeze. He recognized the leader of the Adventurers with a merry grin, and offered to convoy him and his people down the river on a raft of reeds, which was moored to the shadow of a crooked branch that overhung the water. Tuflongbo hesitated before accepting his courteous proposal, and thought fit to take counsel on the matter with his companions, who had already been made aware of the weedy Waif's treacherous and mischievous disposition.

"We should get along with beautiful swiftness, but we should run many more risks than on land," said he, stating the case with great impartiality. "By keeping to the path and marching in the daylight we shall advance slowly but surely; by

entrusting ourselves to the raft on the river we may make a sudden spurt, and we may also make a grievous wreck. What say you then? Speak, my friends."

"I think it would be the wisest to pursue our first course and not forsake the land," said the persevering Canary.

"I don't see that. I vote we all be ducks, and take to the water!" cried the audacious Larch.

"And if harm come of it, who cares?" asked Mustard.

"Not I, for one," answered Chamomile. "I am used to calamities, and always get the better of them."

"I am safe in every case," observed Larkspur; "it would not overtax my powers to turn a summerset across the river if the raft upset."

"Something is sure to happen whatever we do, and I believe it is coming now," said Gooseberry, and looked about expectingly.

The majority of the voices being decidedly in favour of the raft, Tuflongbo intimated to his weedy little friend on the crag that he and his band would be glad to avail themeslves of his amiable services as steersman; and all the adventurers gaily embarked.

"You must sit fair to balance the raft," said the Waif; and then, getting astride of his straw, he

swirled quickly round to catch the main current of the stream, and floated triumphantly away, towing his freight after him in the highest glee.

For some time all went well; the river was one sunny dance of Ripples, and wherever rock or crag peered out there crowded the Eddies at their feet, while the frosted Spray and feathery Foam took refuge on their highest crests. But the trees, and bushes, and flowery banks went by with wonderful rapidity; and at length their beautiful greenness gave place to precipitous barriers of stone which enclosed the river like walls.

Tuflongbo held his peace, but he began to think within himself that they had done unwisely in abandoning the shore. Looking behind him, the rocks shut out the sun, and the many windings of the stream made them appear like bastion beyond bastion in an ever-growing gloom. Looking forward, the grey cliffs were equally formidable, but on the edge of the most distant there always gleamed a ray of brightness, which caused him to hope that the next bend of the river would bring the raft once more into daylight; but when they came near it as invariably faded away. The Ripples that had played about the Adventurers when they started on their perilous voyage now gave place to heavy Waves, that bore the frail raft to and fro, threatening every moment to dash it to pieces on

the rocks, while the weedy little Waif, astride of his straw, took no heed to its danger except to enjoy it.

In this crisis Tuflongbo's wits were on the alert. He perceived that he was betrayed, and, passing the word round in whispers to each of his companions, warned them to be ready to attempt an escape the instant he gave the signal. Then, waiting his opportunity, he leant forward on the raft and parleyed a little while with the treacherous Waif.

"Whither away so fast, unskilful steersman?" asked he; but the Waif only glanced wickedly over his shoulder and laughed. "Those laugh best who laugh last!" thought Tuflongbo; and he stood up on the swaying raft, prepared for a spring to the rocks, all the rest imitating his example.

The river was now rushing down a descent so rapid that it seemed like the arch of the bow they had passed under the day before when leaving the Chief City of Sheneland; and it became evident that it was the weedy Waif's intentions to bear them all away to the Water World; and he would undoubtedly have succeeded in his wicked design had the Adventurers been under a leader less prompt, brave, and enterprising than Tuflongbo.

After the lapse of a few acutely anxious moments, the raft drifted abreast of a narrow ledge

of rocks on the farther side of the river; then Tuflongbo shouted "Now," and springing altogether, four of the band at once made sure their footing upon it.

These were the Leader himself, Larkspur, Mustard, and Gooseberry. Chamomile fell so far short of it as to drop into deep water, and Tuflongbo watched fearfully while his energetic companion battled with the Waves that tried to beat him back within reach of the weedy Waif. Sometimes the Spray dashed quite over his head and he disappeared, but the next moment he was seen striking out for the cliffs, and after an interval of severe buffeting he gained them, and clambered up by his comrades, perfectly sound in wind and limb. Canary, in taking his leap, had aimed too low, and only contrived to cling with hands and teeth to the slippery ledge; but after hanging in this imminent peril for some time, he succeeded in drawing himself up until his chin rested upon it; and so persevered in his struggles until he also stood in safety beside the Leader.

It now only remained to rescue Larch, who, with unexampled audacity, had jumped upon a low rock that lay midway the river, and was now figuring there in a thousand taunting antics before the disappointed Waif. Tuflongbo hailed him to leave his dangerously isolated refuge; for they on

the ledge could see that of which Larch was entirely unaware—namely, that a strong force of Eddies was close round his rock, and swelling higher and higher, urged on by the mighty Waves, until he was in the centre of a black Whirlpool, which threatened every moment to engulf him.

He now appeared to discern his danger, and, to the relief of his companions, to be preparing to meet it with that fertility of resource for which he was distinguished. The weedy Waif had come to an anchor in the smoothest part of the stream, wearing a most comical, tragical expression of disappointment on his bell-shaped visage. The raft, swayed by the current, drifted to the edge of the Whirlpool, and Larch, measuring the distance with his eye, made a sudden spring for it, and tried to cut the cords by which the treacherous steersman had towed it along before. It now became a struggle for life or death betwixt the two, terrible to behold. The Waif put forth all his strength to get back into the main tide with the raft and its one passenger, while Larch exerted himself to the utmost to prevent what would certainly have been fatal to himself. After a desperate tussle he at last succeeded in severing the tow-ropes, and not only that, but in tilting the weedy Waif off his straw; when he immediately, to everybody's admiration and delight, turned over on his back,

and floated away, heels uppermost, down the river, until he was quite out of sight!

Tuflongbo and those upon the rock-ledge with him set up a loud cheer, which stimulated Larch to make one audacious spring—and there he was, safe landed again amongst his companions. This place of refuge hung on the face of the precipitous cliffs, about half way between the abyss of foaming waters and the calm blue of the upper air; and how to ascend the towering wall became now a question for the most careful deliberation. The inequalities *below* were many, but above there did not appear to be footing for a bird; and while the Adventurers were consulting, the grey Mists and Shadows of Night began to look down gloomily upon them from the top, thus making their position the more perilous and uncertain.

A spirit of weariness and discontent then showed itself amongst Tuflongbo's band for the first time; but he dexterously crushed it out at once by saying, "Let us have no strength wasted in useless regrets and complainings. The time once past is past for ever; the thing once done is done for ever! Our mistakes are our warnings, and our sufferings are our experience. If the heart of any amongst you fail him already, let him return to the peaceful pursuits and safe monotony of home: this difficulty we are in now is but an

earnest of what those must expect who would devote themselves to a life of Adventure. Well do I know that there are braggarts whose prowess lies in their tongues, but such I did not look to find amongst *you!*"

This grave rebuke was received with silence, but each of the band immediately testified by his actions that the Leader was not mistaken in their metal. Larkspur volunteered to scale the steep rocks in search of a way for the rest to ascend, and forthwith began to mount by means of his difficult fly-steps, every eye following him most anxiously. He had not gone far, however, when he was observed to halt, and then suddenly to project himself, as it were, into the solid rock, leaving nothing but the double-soles and the nails in the heels of his shoes visible to his waiting comrades below. These also gradually disappeared; and it seemed as if the agile Larkspur had been swallowed up to be beheld no more, when all at once his voice was heard shouting in the wildest glee that he had made a wonderful discovery of a Cave lit up with Lamps of Gems, shining everywhere upon the walls and roof!

"We must enter that miraculous Cave," said Tuflongbo. "Such a place is mentioned in many traditions of Ogres. Come, my brave comrades,

let us endeavour to follow the agile Larkspur with what speed we may: the enterprise is arduous, but for that only the more glorious if we make it successful. Amongst the Elfin Gifts that I received at my birth, there was a Spider's thread to hold fast and spin true, of which we will now make use. I will go first with the end in my hand, and each of you, my valiant friends, must cling on to it behind, and so I doubt not but that we shall reach the Cave."

And then the Leader reeled out the thread and started, all the rest following in his steps and grasping the slender stay, until at length, after many a slip and slide, many a false move and stumble up the slippery ascent, they contrived to gain the spot where Larkspur stood awaiting them. Most of them were exhausted and half fainting with the fatiguing nature of their recent efforts, but as soon as Tuflongbo recovered breath enough to speak, he cheered them all by saying, "There is many a task that seems impossible until we try it; but after this great triumph, let us never more distrust our hearts, our heads, or our feet, for they have served us bravely on this occasion!"

"So they have!" cried the Adventurers; "so they have, Tuflongbo!"

"And in honour of their constancy, let me pro-

pose that we henceforth and for ever reject the term *Impossible* from our travelling vocabulary!" said the Leader, striking while the iron of their fervour was hot.

"It will be a worthy celebration," replied Canary, and the rest acquiescing with equal cordiality in Tuflongbo's suggestion, a vote was passed obliterating the word *Impossible* from all the Adventurers' future thoughts and conversation —a very important measure to have been accomplished so early in their journey, and one fraught with splendid results afterwards.

The Leader now shook himself straight in his Chameleon suit, and, advancing a few paces, looked down a narrow, sloping, funnel-shaped entrance into the Cave, while all his band crowded close upon him to behold its wonders too.

"Magnificent!" cried they, as with one voice. "Oh! radiant, dazzling, most glorious!" and so stood awe-struck at the fine spectacle that flashed upon their astonished gaze.

Tuflongbo then made a brief harangue congratulating them and himself on the discovery of this singular place at the outset of their Adventures, and after reminding them of the watchfulness and caution that might be called for in their explorations, he bade them under all circumstances preserve their self-possession and dignity, and then

prepared, as their Leader, to enter first this Enchanted Cave-Palace of Gems.

None held back, and the instant the last of the daring seven had passed through the entrance and over the threshold of the glittering chamber, a mighty gate of rock clanged to behind them with the sound of thunder; and there they were, caught, though they knew it not, in Ogre Gulmalog's trap!

## III.

### OGRE GULMALOG AND HIS BUBBLE-BLOWER.

NEVER, surely, was trap so beautifully baited before as this trap of the dreadful Ogre Gulmalog. And it was beautiful, too, in itself, having walls set round with a thousand columns of crystal, and a dome-shaped roof tinted throughout like intersecting rainbow arches. The floor was of coral, red and rare, and in the midst stood a low table of agate, spread over with the richest and costliest dainties—cream tart, trifle, syllabub, ambrosia, pie, custard, and tipsy cake; and negus and nectar in goblets of cut topaz with handles of gold. Innumerable lamps gleamed from the crystal columns and from the central flower-knot of the roof—

lamps of ruby, emerald, sapphire, carbuncle, amethyst, and opal, with lights of diamonds twinkling and flashing through their transparent globes of exquisite colour.

A profound silence reigned throughout this enchanted scene, which the Adventurers, overcome with admiration and delight, did not attempt to break for a considerable interval. But at length the leader spoke proud words of congratulation, and invited himself and his companions to supper at the luxuriously furnished table, when all immediately became seated around it, Tuflongbo presiding from the golden throne at the upper end with superlative grace and dignity.

The travellers were, as may be well imagined, exceedingly hungry after their long march and perilous sail on the river, and when they were served, each prepared to enjoy the welcome feast with keen appetite. There was consequently but little conversation, everybody being for the time quite absorbed and busy, and this was but reasonable and natural at the beginning; only, strange to say, the silence continued, and the more the adventurers ate the less satisfied they appeared to be.

They took from every dish in turn, and tried them all, but nothing seemed to diminish; and when they were tired of lifting their hands to

their mouths, they leant back in their chairs, and said, disconsolately, that they felt as empty as when they sat down. Canary alone persevered, but he finally gave in too, and proclaimed himself no better off than the rest; adding that he had made the round of the board, and had tasted everything, and had found all of precisely the same flavour—that is, of the flavour of froth or snow-smoke. And his experience was the experience of all his companions and of their leader also. But still the lamps of gems twinkled, and the table seemed as well furnished as ever.

"Shall we try again?" said Tuflongbo, after an interval of repose; and once more they set to work, and worked till their jaws and elbows ached, but for no good; when they gave up they were just as before—hungry, and hollow as drums.

"'Tis of no use — we are all swallowing shadows!" then said the Leader; "and truly we deserved something more substantial after our arduous march and miraculous escape from the river. Let each of us regale with a crust of his own loaf; though it be but plain fare, it is better than *this*."

As Tuflongbo spoke, there rang through the chamber the echo of opening and shutting distant doors, which gradually drew nearer and nearer

until the rock gate which had clanged to when the Adventurers entered split open with a mighty noise, and, guided by invisible hands, in rushed a second table, covered with smoking dishes of fish, flesh, and fowl, hot from the pot and the spit.

"It must be admitted that our host, whoever he is, practises the virtue of hospitality," cried the Leader, his spirits rising with the savoury steam. "Let us fall to, my friends, and save our crusts for another occasion."

So each restored his crust, which he had just begun to munch, to his wallet, and applied himself with fresh vigour to the enchanted feast; but alas! and alas! with no more profit than at first.

"This is too much!" then cried Tuflongbo, in a rage, and sprang up from his golden throne, and paced the chamber in the greatest perturbation of mind. His followers regarded him with dismay, and endeavoured to compose him, but he would not be composed. "I wish," said he, fuming hotly, "the churlish knave who has dared to play us these sorry tricks would only show himself!"

Immediately, from nobody knew whither, there appeared in the midst of the band an exceedingly small Dwarf, black and ugly, with a ring through his nose, who louted low before the

Leader, and screamed in a shrill, unpleasant voice, "Here I am, Tuflongbo, at your service—Gulmalog's Bubble-Blower."

Tuflongbo returned his bow in a surly fashion, and then for several minutes stood regarding him with severe and silent displeasure.

"You are very hard to please," said the Dwarf. "What more could you desire than you have had? I have blown you my best bubbles."

"But bubbles are not our natural food—they leave us as hungry as they found us; we require something more solid," replied Tuflongbo.

"Will you try these, then?" asked the Dwarf, and drew from his pocket a handful of dull pebbles.

"What is the use of them? They are but stones, and would break our teeth." And the Leader dexterously tilted them out of his palm, so that they rolled abroad over the coral floor and were lost.

"You shall repent it!" shrieked the Dwarf, and vanished as mysteriously as he had appeared, leaving the rock gate open.

Tuflongbo now drew forth his crust again, and this time he ate it up, and felt much refreshed thereby, all his companions imitating his example with a like effect. They were then equal to their fate, and began curiously to examine the structure

of this Cave of Gems, the Leader making a sketch of it, while Larkspur and others, with his permission, climbed up to the lamps and tore down some of the finest to carry away as spoil. But it is a remarkable fact that as soon as they were detached from their places, they lost all their brilliance, and became as unattractive as the Dwarf's handful of pebbles which Tuflongbo had chucked away.

While the band were thus occupied, all at once they heard a heavy advancing step, and the blowing as of a very stout creature short of breath; and the leader had barely time to cry out, "Let every one lie down, shut his eyes, and feign sleep," and to get the command executed, when there entered the great Ogre Gulmalog, led by the hideous little Dwarf with the ring through his nose.

"Where are they?" growled the Ogre, in a voice that sounded as if it came out of his boots.

"Here," said the Dwarf, and pointed to the hapless Adventurers lying in a ring on the floor, apparently sound asleep.

Ogre Gulmalog eyed them greedily, and rubbed his hands for joy. "Which shall I have for supper?" considered he; "they look so nice I think I could eat 'em all—yes, they look so nice, I think I could eat 'em all!"

"Surely, my master, they will be just enough. And how will you have them done—devilled or grilled?" asked the Dwarf.

"Grilled; and do them very brown!" answered the Ogre, licking his monstrous lips. And the Dwarf immediately gathered up all the Adventurers one after the other into his cook's apron, and ran off with them to the kitchen, his master crying after him to make haste, and let him have them hot, and served up with plenty of tomato sauce!

## IV.

### THE AWFUL FATE OF GULMALOG'S BUBBLE-BLOWER.

Consider for one moment this painful crisis—Tuflongbo could never afterwards speak of it without a shudder.

As the Dwarf ran towards his kitchen, opening and shutting innumerable doors, and twisting and turning down the most intricate passages, he shook the contents of his apron with vengeful triumph. The Adventurers rolled over and over—now heads uppermost, and now heels,—and were as nearly as possible frightened out of their wits; so that when Gulmalog's Bubble-Blower emptied them

out upon the floor they were bedazed and bemuddled to such an excess, that he trussed them up and skewered them like pigeons without one of them having strength or sense to resist. This done, he ranged them neatly in a row on the dresser, and proceeded to blow the Fire, which in his absence had sunk very low.

While he was engaged in this manner, the hapless travellers had plenty of leisure to reflect on their desperate situation, and Tuflongbo presently said aloud—"I can assure Gulmalog's Bubble-Blower that he will never find *me* grilling calmly for his voracious master's supper."

"Nor me," said Larch. "Nor me," said Mustard. And so said they all.

"What's that?" cried the Dwarf. "You won't be grilled calmly, won't you? We shall see. Wait a bit!" And then he laid down his bellows for a moment, and took up a flour-dredger, and dredged them all over with flour until they looked exactly like a miller and his men; after which he returned to blowing the Fire.

But the Fire was sulky and would not burn. It sputtered and crackled, and puffed out volleys of pungent smoke, and Sparks that flew in the Dwarf's face, but neither Flicker nor Flash, Glimmer nor Twinkle, Blaze nor Flame, would show themselves at all. Tuflongbo could not help

laughing while Gulmalog's Bubble-Blower muttered over his fruitless task, that the wood was green, and left it to dry while he compounded the tomato sauce. But he sneezed in spite of his valour, when the odious little cook took a handful of salt and sprinkled him and his adventurers over, and seasoned them duly with pepper, according to his master's taste, for the pepper and salt both were of very strong nature. Then the Dwarf got ready the gridiron, and the dish on which they were to be served up when ready. But still the Fire continued cold, and as black as the cook himself. Once only had he any hope of it, and that was when very suddenly Blaze darted out of the smoke, and made a rapid speech which he could not understand. But Tuflongbo understood it, and rejoiced. Blaze bade him not be afraid, for the Salamanders were his friends, and would never lend themselves to grilling him or any of his band; and having given him this comfortable assurance, the good servant dropped down amongst the ashes and disappeared, to the great rage and disappointment of the Bubble-Blower.

"I shall have to make a salad of them, I do believe," snarled he, and ran out into Gulmalog's garden to pick some fresh herbs.

"Now is our time," whispered Tuflongbo. "We

were skewered in such a hurry, that I have come undone." And then he went quickly down the row and released his followers, who stretched their cramped limbs and immediately jumped off the dresser.

The Leader then made them all hide behind the door, and as the Dwarf entered, bringing his herbs, they sprang out on him with one accord, and overpowered him, in spite of his enraged struggles, and bound him hand and foot, and finally chained him by the ring through his nose to his own spit, and left him dangling, and spinning, and twirling very fast indeed; and the Fire gave him a warm reception, and licked his hands and his face with affectionate glee. And Flicker and Flash, Glimmer and Twinkle, Blaze and Flame came out of their lurking-places forthwith to pay him their fervent compliments; and the frisky Sparks frolicked and danced round him as if his roasting were a jubilee. And there he very probably dangles, and twirls, and twists to this moment, for he was so exceedingly old, tough, and stringy, that it is not likely he could ever be cooked through!

This act of justice having been performed, Tuflongbo congratulated his followers, thanked them for their cheerful assistance, and consulted as to what should be done next; prophesying to

each and all undying honour and glory if they continued to acquit themselves always thus valorously in dangerous circumstances.

Meanwhile Ogre Gulmalog sat in the parlour waiting for his supper, and when he could not wait any longer he sallied forth, and blundered along through the intricate passages, seeking his way to the kitchen: and arriving there, he found his Bubble-Blower chained to his own spit, and all the Adventurers regaling themselves with the delicious tomato-sauce! He burst into a jolly laugh, which finished off with an affected quaver of trepidation, that caused Tuflongbo to think and say: "This big fellow is not brave—I declare he seems afraid of us!" And, on the spur of the moment, he turned sharply about, marched up to the vast Ogre, and cried, "Gulmalog, you are our prisoner!" at the same time, rising on tip-toe, and, with the crook of his staff, tapping his enormous beet-root nose! Gulmalog, thus insulted, shook as if he were made of jelly, dropt on his knees, and supplicated mercy in a most canting, hypocritical whine; but Tuflongbo turned a deaf ear to his entreaties, and commanded him to be strictly bound, telling him that his ultimate fate would depend entirely on his own behaviour.

The Leader then compelled him to act as guide through the secret chambers of his Cave; and

with the utmost apparent reluctance, groaning and carrying his head down, the Ogre set out, the seven sprightly Adventurers following close in his footsteps, and poking him on whenever they fancied he lingered. And thus they went through many glittering and gorgeous apartments, continually amazed and delighted at their magnificence, until they came to a deep-sunk door of iron, all barred, bolted, and rusty, from which Gulmalog seemed as if he would have turned aside to pass it by, had not Tuflongbo sternly bidden him stay and open it. So, groaning more heavily than before, he took a great key from his girdle, inserted it in the lock, and turned it thrice; when immediately the mighty gates swung open on their creaking hinges, and the Ogre's dungeons were revealed in all their terrible gloom and horror.

## V.

### HOW TUFLONGBO AND HIS FAITHFUL BAND WERE DISPERSED.

"If there be here any miserable captives, let them speak, and I will deliver them!" cried Tuflongbo, as he plunged into the darkness.

But though his voice rang echoing through and

through the vault until it died away in a faint sigh, there was no answer. The Leader of the Adventurers waited, listened, and shouted again, but still without reply. This he did thrice, and finding none to claim his help, he turned round to bid the Ogre lead the way out of his dungeons, when, to his inexpressible astonishment and dismay, he saw that Gulmalog had disappeared.

Gulmalog had disappeared, and so also had the door by which he had ushered the travellers into the vault—there being now no visible inlet or outlet, but only blank, dank walls, so high that the roof was lost in the gloom. A light, very faint, pale and cold, filled the dungeon, and a moist atmosphere, which caused a fearful creeping and crisping of the skin, accompanied by an aguish chattering of the teeth. Had he not known them so well, Tuflongbo might have been now discouraged by a doubt lest some of his followers were afraid, but no such suspicion came near his mind; and though bewildered, and even annoyed, by this specimen of Ogreish perfidy, he found in it that amount of consolation which the philosophic mind can discover in the most untoward events.

"If it be our fate to go no farther, still we have accomplished the great object of our travels," said he, in a cheerful voice; "we have verified

the existence of Ogres—by some supposed to be an extinct or fabulous race—and have enjoyed large opportunities of studying the private life of one very remarkable personage amongst them. But as this dungeon may be dangerous to our health should we remain in it too long, let us now diligently seek for a way of escape."

These calm words reassured the Adventurers, and they immediately dispersed themselves through the vault in quest of some opening; but hardly had they been thus employed for the space of an hour, when they heard a threatening, rumbling noise overhead, and looking up in alarm, they saw a trap open in the roof, and Gulmalog's cruel, ugly face gazing down upon them, expanded into a broad grin, which displayed a triple row of sharp teeth.

"Make yourselves happy, my little Fairykins!" cried he; "I shall only want one at a time!" And he dropt a line amongst them, suddenly, with a magic hook at the end of it, which began to cast itself about in an attempt to catch them; and though they ran and ran, and turned and turned, and made a thousand desperate efforts to escape it, it at last caught poor Mustard, and Gulmalog instantly drew him up through the trap.

"Never mind me, Tuflongbo, I don't care!"

THE YOUNG ADVENTURERS IN GULMALOG'S DUNGEON. p. 112.

sang out the gallant little Fairykin, as he vanished; "when Gulmalog tries to eat me, won't I bite his tongue and make him roar!" And then the trap was closed with a crash, the Ogre proclaiming that he had got enough for the present, and politely requesting those who were left to make themselves as comfortable as circumstances would allow—a sarcasm which added a new sting to their pain.

If they had before sought diligently for an outlet from their prison, they now sought it with the fiery energy of those who know that life depends upon success; but they sought in vain, and were all at once paralyzed and struck motionless by a hideous roar which resounded from above.

"Depend upon it, Mustard has bitten the Ogre's tongue, and perishes not ingloriously!" whispered Tuflongbo; and the next moment the trap rumbled open again, and down came the line with the magic hook at the end of it; and though the captives ran and ran, and turned and turned, nothing availed them, for, after a fierce chase, Chamomile was taken, and hauled up like his predecessor; with his last words comforting his companions by an assurance that he had not lost his energy in adversity, and did not despair of a safe and happy deliverance even yet.

It soon appeared that Gulmalog was in the habit of feeding once in every hour; for scarcely had that interval elapsed, when again the trap opened and the magic hook descended. This time it caught Gooseberry, who said he expected it, and made no more ado.

Resignation to their inevitable lot now for a short space took possession of the hearts of the unfortunate Adventurers; they sat down sorrowful and despondent, until they were all grown over with blue mould; but when the Ogre returned to fish for another of the dejected band, they still preserved energy enough to make attempts to baffle his hook and line. It was to no purpose, however, that they strove to evade them; for he soon caught Larch, who promised himself a melancholy consolation in pulling Gulmalog's nose before he was eaten, and so vanished through the trap from the sad eyes of his companions. Canary went next, after a very prolonged hunt; then Larkspur, buoyant and light-headed as ever, assuring the agonized Leader that he would roll himself into a porcupine-ball, and thus tempt the Ogre to take him all at one greedy bite, when he would expand in his throat, violently kick out his arms and legs, and so choke him.

With such slight hope of rescue as hung on this one chance, Tuflongbo contrived to sustain

himself through the next terrible hour; but again at the regular moment creaked open the trap, and Gulmalog's voice sounded from above more gruff and hungry than ever; from which it appeared that Larkspur's ingenious plan for his Captain's deliverance had failed.

Now, though Tuflongbo had learnt by a too grave experience that, let Fairykins run as they will, when Ogres hunt for them they must inevitably be caught, he yet did his utmost to circumvent and escape the magic hook: but it took him at last, and, swift, there he was, landed once more in the Ogre's beautiful parlour!

And now occurred a most remarkable and unexpected event, which bore singular testimony to the truth of that disputed statement which Wild Sorrel had made at the Farewell Feast—namely, that Ogres always reject those little Fairykins which are too good to be eaten; not that they *like* to do so, but that it is a rule amongst them which they could not break without infringing their strict code of honour.

The bereft Leader of the Adventurers glanced round the gem-lit Cave, but there were no relics of his hapless followers to be seen, and he prepared himself for the worst — perceiving that Gulmalog, who had looked not ill-natured before he was disappointed of his grilled Fairykins at

supper, now betrayed a most ruthless and ferocious temper, snapping and snarling as he filed his teeth, until Tuflongbo, even in that crisis of his fate, made philosophic reflections on his ugliness.

As Gulmalog filed, he also muttered, and the Adventurer, listening heedfully to his mutterings, overheard him say, with such thankful feelings as may be better imagined than described—"Too good to be eaten, are they, the little mites of things!—too good to be eaten, indeed! that is a joke—a funnier I never heard—*too good to be eaten!* I can't get over it. However, this little fellow must make up for his friends; I have caught a Tartar at last, and, I warrant me, *he* is not too good to be eaten! Let us try. Trot over here, Tuflongbo, and let me have a look at you. Suppose you end your travels by a journey down my Red Lane?"

"Suppose nothing of the sort," replied the Captain, and approached the Ogre with a leisurely dignity befitting the occasion. But as soon as he came within reach, Gulmalog snatched him up, dipped his head into a little that was left of the tomato sauce, and was just going to bite it off, when a voice at his elbow said distinctly, "Let him go, Gulmalog; Tuflongbo is FAR too good to be eaten!" and the Ogre, with a roar of rage,

disappointment, and hunger, flung him bodily into the salt-cellar.

Tuflongbo immediately scrambled to his feet and shook himself, then he glanced round, in the hope of seeing his unknown advocate, but no one was visible except the Ogre, who now took him by his Chameleon coat-collar, and, quitting the Cave through the rock-gate, carried him up a winding stair to the top of the cliffs, and, after turning him thrice round until he was giddy, there left him, in the midst of a dark night and of heavily-falling rain. It was some time before he recovered his faculties sufficiently to make any survey of his position; but when he did so, he found himself in an entirely new country, and quite alone!

## VI.

### HOW LARKSPUR REJOINED TUFLONGBO.

When the gallant Tuflongbo fully realized his melancholy and forsaken condition, he did not sit down to bewail it as a weak-minded adventurer might have done, but braced himself firmly up, set his knapsack straight, took a resolute grip of

his staff, and prepared to set out in search of his lost companions, intending to postpone to that necessary duty all further inquiries after the perfidious race of Ogres.

The night was intensely dark, and the rain came down with a will; but Tuflongbo never doubted that each member of his scattered band had been separately ejected from Gulmalog's Cave in the same style as himself, and was, therefore, convinced that he should be able to come on their traces as soon as daylight enabled him to examine the sodden ground. And in this he was not mistaken.

When dawn broke, he immediately began his investigations, and before long he detected numerous footmarks, which, however, tended in various directions; but there could be no uncertainty as to whose they were, for all the Adventurers wore shoes like their Leader—that is, shoes with square toes, double soles, and nails in the heels. Five distinct pairs of impressions he quickly made out, but the sixth pair was missing; and Tuflongbo was almost ready to despair of finding them, when suddenly he became aware of finger-prints in the moist sand, and his heart grew light again, for these finger-prints were those of Larkspur, who had evidently taken himself off from the scene of his misfortunes, not by running away on his feet,

but by a swift wheel-movement, in the practice of which he was singularly skilled.

It now only remained to decide which of the several tracks Tuflongbo should first pursue, and after a few moments of active consideration, he determined to follow Larkspur; and, without loss of time, he set out, keeping the finger-prints constantly in view.

For many, many fairy miles the lonely Leader plodded on over a wide waste of sand, now whistling and now singing to keep up his spirits, and hoping that the sound of his familiar voice might perchance be heard, and answered by one or another of his faithful band. But it was not. A profound silence and solitude reigned everywhere, and the day was far spent before there appeared any change in the monotony of the landscape. At last, when his feet were growing weary, and beginning to lag, he saw the shadow of an enormous head projected along the ground before him, then of another, and another—three heads in all—which appeared to spring but from one pair of shoulders. There was a scant herbage in this part of the plain, and Tuflongbo immediately hid himself amongst it, and looked out sharply for the body that cast this portentous shadow; and soon he saw it, travelling slowly over the brow of a line of hills—a gigantic Ogre with three heads,

having faces all round, and on the centre one a wonderful peaked cap, in the band of which was stuck poor Larkspur, waving in the wind like a feather.

Tuflongbo's heart bounded with joy when he recognized his unhappy comrade in this dangerous and conspicuous situation; and, stealthily applying his whistle to his lips, he blew three clear notes to attract his attention. At this, the feather in the Ogre's cap was seen briskly to steady itself, to rise up, to peer round, and finally to peer over the top of it in a consequential way; and Larkspur had just one moment given him to detect his Leader amongst the grass, when the Ogre sneezed violently, and the poor Adventurer was shaken down from his look-out in the concussion, and left feebly hanging, as it were, quite out of curl, over the brim of the cap.

As the Ogre tramped heavily past the spot where Tuflongbo lay concealed, the earth under him shook terribly; but as soon as he was gone by, out crept the watchful Adventurer, and stole after him, determined not to lose sight of his three heads until he had rescued Larkspur from his perilous position. But Tuflongbo, when he left the shelter of the reedy grass, had forgotten that the Ogre, having faces all round, must have eyes behind as well as before, which eyes were

like those of a lynx, and could not fail soon to spy him out—and spy him out, of course, they did; and, wheeling round rapidly, the Ogre picked him up between his finger and thumb, and, plucking off his singular cap, stuck him also for a feather in the band, beside his unfortunate friend; and then perched it again on his central head, which he wagged triumphantly for ever so long after, to the inexpressible misery of his two ornamental captives. When he was tired of wagging it he kept it still, and then the high-spirited Leader embraced his follower, and they condoled with each other, in mournful terms, upon this untoward style of reunion; but agreed, finally, that it was a comfort not to be alone in their misfortunes.

"I do not feel as if we were in imminent danger," remarked Tuflongbo, presently, growing accustomed to his elevation.

"Neither do I," replied Larkspur. "This Ogre is a vegetarian, I believe; and, if so, he will prove of a milder temper than Gulmalog."

Tuflongbo was anxious to know what reason his comrade had for supposing this three-headed Ogre to be a vegetarian.

"Watch and you will see," answered the other. "When he caught me, he was at breakfast in a wood; he dined in a forest; and, when we come

to another thicket, I expect he will stop and eat his supper."

Larkspur's information was correct, and his anticipations were not disappointed. A plantation of full-grown pine trees, cactus, and prickly pears, loomed on the horizon, and, as soon as they reached it, the Ogre set to work; and, plucking up the food he wanted by the roots, ate his way straight through the wood. He might have been tracked by the odd leaves, little branches, and chips he dropped, crumb-like, all along the path, as he made his evening meal. It was wonderful to hear his twelve pairs of jaws going at once—crackle, craunch, crack, through the toughest bark as easily as through the tenderest foliage; and Tuflongbo's ambitious spirit revelled in the previsions of honour and glory which must accrue to him for having made so surprising a discovery in the natural history of Ogres as this fact of a triple-headed one subsisting entirely on a vegetable diet.

He would have liked to inquire whether his remarkable captor was ever troubled with toothache from the severity of his masticatory exertions; but a few moments of reflection determined him to practise a wise forbearance for the present —to hear, see, and say nothing until, by a discreet observation, he had learnt whether this

Ogre was or was not a foe to that laudable curiosity that had instigated his great journey in search of adventures.

When they came out at the farther side of the wood, the shades of evening were falling; and, after munching up a handful of fir-cones like nuts for his dessert, the Ogre shook the scraps from his doublet, and quickened his pace; from which the hapless Feathers in his cap conjectured that he was drawing near home.

## VII.

### CLICKACLOP AND HIS OGRESS.

When at last the Adventurers from their dangerous eminence descried the Ogre's dwelling, it proved to be a vast edifice of unhewn stone, standing under the northern shadow of a great barren mountain. The aspect of the surrounding country was bleak, waste, and dreary in the extreme; for the thriftless Ogre had cleared the ground of trees and bushes without exercising the prudent forethought of planting others; so that he had to travel a considerable distance, when he was hungry, before he could find a sufficient stock of food to appease his appetite.

Neither Tuflongbo nor Larkspur felt particularly cheerful as they approached the massive gates of the castle; but that could not be expected at such a crisis, and their spirits underwent a further fluctuation as the Ogre stooped down and blew into the keyhole thrice. At the third gust the gates revolved slowly on their hinges, and a comely Ogress advanced with a smile on her broad visage, and asked in a sweet voice how her brave Clickaclop had spent the day. To this Clickaclop replied that he had spent it very pleasantly.

The pair then sat down by their bright wood-fire, and had a long talk about their own private affairs, until the Ogre, suddenly remembering the Feathers in his cap, pulled it off and presented it to his wife, saying he hoped she would like the pretty little fantastical toys he had brought her. The Ogress immediately began to dance the cap round on her hand, exclaiming over the quaking Adventurers in a perfect enthusiasm of admiration, and vowing that she had never seen anything so altogether novel and charming in her life.

"Are they alive?" cried she. "Oh, how nice! How beautifully they do curl and flutter, to be sure!" and then she danced the cap round again, until Tuflongbo's teeth chattered like castanets; and Larkspur, with all his elasticity, was fairly

shaken out of breath. This innocent little amusement she continued until she was tired of it, when she hung up the cap on a hook against the wall, and at her lord's command knelt down and proceeded to pull off his boots.

The captive Adventurers kept their eyes wide open, and never winked once while the amiable Ogress performed Clickaclop's toilette for the night. It was a lengthy piece of work, and in some respects also, perhaps a rather peculiar one; for when she had removed his boots, she brought a high stool, mounted upon it, and began to *screw off one of his heads*—that on the left shoulder—as if it were quite a matter of course; and a matter of course it must have been, or the Ogre would certainly have resisted; instead of which, he purred, and seemed very much at his ease.

"How very queer! I don't like it at all; it sets my teeth on edge," whispered Larkspur; but Tuflongbo, who was delighted at what he saw, prayed of him to hush, and not draw attention on themselves.

A little oil would have greatly facilitated the removal of Clickaclop's head, but such a useful expedient was unknown to the Ogress, who laboriously turned and twisted it round, creaking and squealing like a rusty hinge, until at last she got

it off, and, opening a secret cupboard, put it up on the top shelf with the utmost care. She then proceeded to screw off the head on the right shoulder, and disposed of that also in the cupboard; and finally she screwed off the central head, which had worn the cap, and, being released from all three, the Ogre threw himself down on his bed, and was asleep in an instant.

The Ogress appeared quite fatigued with her dutiful exertions, and, to refresh herself after them, she lifted the cap from the hook where she had hung it, and spent an hour or more in admiring her new feathers, and trying how they would suit her style of beauty. All this was very ruffling and distasteful to the feelings of the Adventurers, but they endured the indignities to which they were subjected with exemplary patience, so that they found themselves no worse when she again hung them upon the wall, with a promise that she would transfer them to her own dress-cap on the morrow.

She then deliberately screwed off her own head, and after ranging it on the cupboard shelf beside the Ogre's three, locked the door, and then lay down on her bed and fell asleep also.

Being now comparatively safe and unguarded, the Adventurers began to talk matters over, sinking their voices to the lowest and most cautious

of whispers, lest they should be overheard by the slumbering pair.

"I wonder why they take off their heads?" murmured Larkspur, overflowing with praiseworthy curiosity.

"Probably that they may not be troubled with bad dreams," suggested Tuflongbo.

"Most likely. Yet Clickaclop does not seem a savage fellow, nor his wife either."

"By no means—kind and fatherly, on the contrary. I have a proposition to make. Suppose we trust him, and stay here a little while? We may have a chance of being rejoined by our missing comrades if we linger in this neighbourhood, such as we should lose, did we travel farther away from the scene of our dismal separation. Alas! Larkspur, my heart yearns to behold their wobegone faces once more, and it aches with anxiety for the evils that must befall them, left without a leader! Oh, Canary! persevere and be cheerful till we meet! Oh, Chamomile, let not energy fail in this great adversity! Oh, Larch! be audacious to the bounds of extravagance! Oh, Mustard! heed not your calamities! And oh, Gooseberry! live in hope of re-union with Tuflongbo, until your virtuous expectations are crowned with success!" And here the great Adventurer broke down, over-

come with his tender feelings and painful fears.

Larkspur joined in his Leader's natural explosion of sorrow, but presently recovering himself, he endeavoured to impart a little balm of comfort where it was so much needed.

"Most excellent Tuflongbo!" cried he; "let me beseech you not to give way to grief. Clickaclop, no doubt, takes a walk every day, and, perhaps, by degrees, he will pick up all our lost companions, and bring them here, as he brought us, for feathers in his cap. Once thus reunited, we will make joint efforts to escape; and that will not be very difficult, if the Ogre and Ogress lock up their heads in the cupboard every night."

Tuflongbo now calmed himself and looked his troubles steadily in the face, until, at length, the healthy elasticity of his mind recovered its spring, and he was enabled to make light of them.

"After all," said he, cheerfully, "we have but found that of which we set out in honest search —adventures amongst Ogres! Too much success would have been bad for us at the beginning; eh, Larkspur, what say you?"

"I say, that whatever is, is best!" replied Larkspur. "But, Tuflongbo, shouldn't you like to know what the heads are doing up on their cupboard shelf? I should. Let us put off our

emotions and meditations till we have nothing else to amuse us, and get a little further insight into the private life of Clickaclop and his Ogress."

The Leader honourably thanked his light-hearted follower for reminding him of his duty, and, peering inquisitively about the vast hall, he perceived that the Ogress had laid the key of the cupboard on the window-ledge. To discover it and to possess himself of it was but the work of a moment; and with a like promptitude of execution, he put it in the lock, turned it round, and very stealthily opened the door. Larkspur then, with his customary agility, sprang up on the top shelf, and the next instant Tuflongbo was beside him.

And what were those marvellous heads doing in their elegant retirement?

They were doing nothing particular. All their mouths were wide open, certainly, and all their noses—and there were *twelve* of the Ogre's and *four* of his wife's—were snoring as loud as they could snore in a most inharmonious concert, which suggested another reason for their nocturnal removal; possibly they were taken off because the abominable noise of them was found to have a tendency to keep their owners awake. But this is merely speculative. Larkspur mentioned it. remembering that the practice had been abolished

among Fairykins as one wholly subversive of domestic peace; but Tuflongbo was inclined to maintain his first view, that the heads were taken off for the prevention of bad dreams, and perhaps his idea may be found to rest on a firmer basis than that of his sprightly companion.

Larkspur could not help laughing at the ridiculously helpless apect of the features that looked formidable enough when fixed on their rightful shoulders; but his Leader thought the spectacle a most melancholy one; and though he made a sketch of it as a duty, he was in haste to quit the concert, and lock up the musical-box; for he had a fine ear, and a fastidious taste, which endured tortures so long as it continued open. At his desire, therefore, it was closed, and the key being restored to its former place on the window-ledge, the two Adventurers stowed themselves once more in the band of the Ogre's cap, and feeling happily assured that their lives were, for the present, in no peril, they broke a crust together, thought of their scattered comrades, of their fathers and mothers safe and sound at home, and then with quiet minds, committed themselves to several hours of placid and needful rest.

When they awoke in the morning, the Ogress was up, with her head on all right and tight; but Clickaclop still slumbered on his pillow, and

his three heads showed themselves just on the brink of twelve portentous yawns within the open cupboard. The yawns gradually expanded, stretch beyond stretch, until it seemed inevitable that a hair's breadth more must crack their cheeks; but they stopped short on the verge of the catastrophe, and then all the eyes winked and blinked, opened and stared. The Ogre rolled himself off his bed, sat up in his chair, and intimated to his obedient wife that it was time to put his heads on. She immediately quitted the work she had in hand, took them down one after the other, and fitted them on tenderly; and then Clickaclop shook himself and felt ready for his breakfast.

Before going out to seek it, however, he requested to be shown the feathers he had brought home in his cap last night, and the Ogress reached them down from the hook on the wall with an air of the greatest complaisance. The adventurers strove to be very calm while Clickaclop examined them, and extricated them from the band of the cap which he wanted to wear; but their hearts beat very fast indeed, and Tuflongbo's chameleon suit lost much of its vivid colour as he was laid helpless in the Ogress's hand. Larkspur soon joined him there in a similar frame of despondency, but finding, at length, that no harm was intended them, their nerves recovered the

shock, and they looked bright again, which pleased the amiable eyes of the Ogre's wife.

"If you can find me a few more such dainty trimmings, Clickaclop, I shall be delighted," said she, dangling the doleful captives in a ray of sunshine, to enhance the splendour of their brilliant hues.

"I will do my utmost to gratify my fair Buzbuz," was the Ogre's gallant reply. And then he set forth to seek his breakfast, fresh, hungry, and vigorous as a hunter.

As soon as Clickaclop was gone, his faithful wife began to set the castle in order from one end to the other; but wherever she went, she carried the Adventurers with her, and this gave them great opportunities for making notes on the domestic arrangements of this singular family of Ogres. The castle was a very grand place indeed, containing innumerable chambers filled with gold and silver, and beautiful suits of armour; but the most interesting scene of all was the private parlour where Buzbuz kept her caps that she was tired of or had worn out.

When she brought Tuflongbo and Larkspur into this elegant retreat, she laid them on her pin-cushion, which was as big as a moderate-sized feather bed, and gazed leisurely round upon her caps, which hung against the wall in every

degree of limpness and faded antiquity; no doubt they had been gay when they were new, but now they were deplorable old rubbish, and her delight at receiving fresh feathers from Clickaclop to decorate another was very natural.

She was in no haste to make the cap, however, and before it was accomplished to her satisfaction, the Adventurers had been put in and pulled out, and arranged and rearranged a score of times at least; but when it began to darken towards night, she was obliged to make up her mind how she would wear them, and finally they were pinned like two bows to the cap-crown, their knapsacks and walking-sticks being tastefully disposed cross-wise over the centre of each. Buzbuz was humming a tune as she performed her millinery task, or she might have heard the groans of her helpless victims, wrung from the depths of their aggrieved feelings.

"I cannot imagine anything much more humiliating than this!" sighed Larkspur, ready to weep. "And oh! Tuflongbo, there is such a sharp black pin running into me somewhere!"

"Bear it, my friend, bear it!" gasped the leader; "it is better to make gay the company cap of a Buzbuz than to make a last journey down the red lane of a Gulmalog. Take my word for it, no misfortune is so bad but that philosophy

may console us with the certainty of there being a worse, which we are not called on to suffer. Even now my heart feels a more acute pang for my missing comrades than for myself. Where are they? where are they?"

"Lucky not to be here, anyhow!" murmured Larkspur, wriggling himself free from the torture of the pin.

Tuflongbo made no answer, but gave his mind to making the best of his misery, when Buzbuz airily placed her new cap on her head, and went down from her private parlour into the great hall to await her lord's return. The Adventurers could just see each other over the top of it, and that was all; but their position was by no means a bad look-out for what might happen next, and you may be sure they kept their wits alert and their eyes open when the hour for Clickaclop's arrival drew near. The Leader could hear his heart beat in the agony of his expectations, and when, at last, the earth began to shake under the Ogre's approaching footsteps, it leapt into his throat and almost choked him—not quite, for he had yet to live, to grow old, and to go through a world of marvellous adventures!

## VIII.

### CLICKACLOP COMES HOME WITH MORE FEATHERS IN HIS CAP.

THREE loud blasts through the key-hole announced that Clickaclop was there. Then the gates rolled wide open, and the Ogre entered, in the most provoking good-humour, wagging all his three heads with lively exultation.

"Welcome, my brave Clickaclop! Have you brought me any more of the frisky little feathers?" cried Buzbuz; and immediately from the peak of the Ogre's cap resounded a strangled "Bow-wow-wow-ow-ow!" which Tuflongbo recognized with surprise as the voice of Snub, dog to Chickweed the Wiseacre.

"Behold what I have brought you, my treasure!" replied Clickaclop, and held his heads still that she might admire his captives.

"Oh, how glorious grand!" shrieked she, and claspt her hands in ecstasy at the lovely view.

Tuflongbo anxiously craned forward his head to look also, and with mingled feelings of joy and woe, he recognized in the fringe that ornamented the Ogre's cap-brim his five lost followers, Larch, Mustard, Chamomile, Gooseberry, and Canary, hanging, heads downwards, in the most ignominious

fashion. Perched on the peak in the manner of a crest was Snub, barking vociferously, while his poor master clung to his stump of a tail and drifted out on the breeze behind in the most abject distress.

The Leader's first kindly thought was to sound three notes on his whistle, and at the familiar tune a thrill of hope was seen to twinkle through his followers from top to toe, while the fringe on the Ogre's cap vibrated as if they were clapping their hands. Snub also knew the sounds, and stopt short in the midst of a bark to discover the whereabouts of his dear master's friend; immediately he saw him, he made one gallant spring, and hauling Chickweed through the air behind him, leapt from his post on Clickaclop's head to Buzbuz's fine aquiline nose, and after struggling there for a moment to gain his balance, scrambled up on her cap, and lay down by Tuflongbo, overwhelmed with tenderest emotion, and licked his hands and his face—for he was not a Court-dog and had never learnt etiquette.

Tuflongbo welcomed his caresses with gladness, and Larkspur reached up a hand to pat him too, and there was such a commotion altogether on the top of Buzbuz's cap that she took it off, saying it made her head ache, and spent the rest of the evening without one. Clickaclop also laid his

down by his wife's, and thus the Adventurers were once more reunited, with the addition of Chickweed and Snub to their company. It behoved them, however, to be cautious how they expressed their satisfaction, lest they should affront their immense captors; and Snub was entreated to moderate the expression of his natural indignation, for fear mischief should come of it. So his noisy "bow-wow" sank into a low growl, and soon, to everybody's relief, he fell into a snappish dream; from which he did not awake until Buzbuz began to screw off her husband's heads at bed-time—a proceeding which struck him literally dumb with horror and surprise.

Such of the Adventurers as had not before witnessed this operation were much amused thereby, and some of them remarked that it was an excellent way for abolishing curtain-lectures, and desired Tuflongbo to make a note of it; which he did on the same page with the previous speculations that had arisen out of the subject. He also registered in his journal the happy event of the return of his followers, and, in his sketch-book, he made a spirited drawing of Clickaclop as he appeared when he came home with feathers in his cap—a drawing which afterwards excited much wonder and admiration in the art-circles of Sheneland, and was placed ultimately in Queen Os-

munda's royal portfolio, with other original designs by great masters.

Clickaclop and Buzbuz acted precisely as they had done the night before, and as soon as their heads were safely locked up in the cupboard, and their bodies were gone to sleep, the Adventurers felt at their ease, and Tuflongbo proposed that they should begin by setting each other at liberty. This was soon accomplished, and after stretching their cramped limbs and shaking themselves straight in their clothes, they sat down in a ring on the table, and held a solemn talk over their situation, which they wound up by a brief recital of their respective calamities since they were fished for by the dreadful Ogre Gulmalog in his odious dungeon, and then separately turned adrift in the dark night, on its being discovered that they were too good to be eaten.

"Beloved brothers in adventure!" said the Leader, opening the council, with a voice of emotion, as soon as silence was established in the circle; "my friends and faithful followers, behold us again reunited after our grievous and anxious dispersion! Words are too weak to express my sentiments on this sublime event, therefore suffer me to leave them to your own warm imaginations, and let us celebrate it by relating in as few phrases as are consistent, the persecutions that befell each

of us while we were divided. Mustard, you were the first to be caught by the magic hook of the ferocious Gulmalog—to you, therefore, belongs the precedence. Stand up and speak, but be not long-winded!" So the reckless Mustard stood up, shook his yellow locks as if shaking care from him, and delivered himself as follows:—

"My noble Captain and dear friends, when I disappeared through the treacherous trap before your woeful eyes, I did not mind except for the poignant sorrow that I left in your kind hearts. The hideous Ogre did nothing but laugh while he exultingly promised himself a dainty supper on your humble comrade's bones; but as soon as he attempted to bite me, I returned the compliment, with interest, and in a towering rage he spat me out of his mouth—in what direction I was too confused to observe. Were it not that modesty forbids, I should wish to add that an invisible voice declared me *too good to be eaten*—but I will pass that over. Fancy plays strange tricks with us sometimes, and the shock certainly reduced me to a state of insensibility, from which I did not recover until I found myself airily elevated to the band of Clickaclop's cap. The wind and the motion combined restored me to my faculties, and after a long day of distress, I was brought hither

in company with my worthy friends, as you already know; and that is all I have to tell."

The Leader next called upon Chamomile for his story, and the energetic little Fairykin immediately stood forth.

"I never despair under the gloomiest circumstances," said he; "and when Gulmalog proposed to appease his appetite by devouring me without even the ceremony of salt, I implored him for his own credit's sake, to reflect on the enormity of what he was going to do, and he admitted me to a parley. I then convinced him that from the adversity I had always suffered, I should prove an exceedingly bitter morsel to whomsoever I might furnish a meal; an unseen voice also pleaded in my favour a *goodness* to which I will only casually allude, and to my thankful astonishment, the cruel Ogre rose from his seat in a passion, opened a little window in the wall and flung me out. Cold, hungry, and athirst, I wandered to and fro the desert plain until Clickaclop happened to pass by that way; he immediately picked me up, and stuck me beside the pungent Mustard for a feather in his cap."

Gooseberry was next invited to tell his tale, and rising on tiptoe, he looked about for applause, received it, and began. "Honoured Tuflongbo!

You know my disposition, you know that I live in a state of calm expectancy, and that whatever happens can therefore never come amiss to me. When Gulmalog hauled me out of his treacherous dungeon, I merely composed myself and looked for something turning up worthy of attention; but after growling over me for a minute or two, the Ogre tossed me like a pancake, caught me again, and then threw me out of his parlour-window uninjured. *This* I had *not* anticipated, which proves the truth of that great axiom of philosophers—'There is nothing certain but the unforeseen.' *I* also received mysterious testimony to my hidden virtues, but this was no more than I had a right to expect, and it in no wise influenced my spirits. I scrambled to my feet and wandered away dejected in search of my Leader and my friends, until Clickaclop overtook and captured me. The rest you know."

Larch was now bidden to speak, and he spoke as follows, with the audacious breadth of metaphor peculiar to his character:—

"When I left you, most noble Tuflongbo, I threatened to pull Gulmalog's nose, and I pulled it; I became a wasp to him, a mosquito, a hornet, a very swarm of gnats, until he went down on his knees to me and besought my excellence to go away; and having wreaked a just vengeance on

his hideous countenance, I gave him a final sting and departed. After flying leagues in pursuit of my scattered comrades, in an evil hour Clickaclop caught me and brought me hither to grace his short-lived triumph, as all of you have seen."

It was Canary's turn to speak next, and he gave his narrative with singular modesty and effect. "My gallant Captain," said the cheerful little Fairykin; "before Gulmalog closed the trap after I was taken, I began to sing, and sang with such persevering sweetness that his hard heart was touched, and at a word from an unseen advocate he let me go. I had a weary day and night of loneliness, but at last Clickaclop saw me and added me to his borrowed plumes; for which I thank him, since my capture has ended in restoring me to the society of my Leader and my friends."

Larkspur was then called on, and explained himself in glowing language. "Grand Tuflongbo!" were his words; "it was not permitted me to rescue you in the original and expansive style I promised when dragged out of your presence by the magic hook; for the instant Gulmalog got me into his parlour, he seized an enormous battledore, and using me for a shuttlecock, we played a capital game together. The silly fellow meant it for mischief, but any one who knows my lightness and elasticity will be sure I found it fun,

and even regretted when it was over; but once flying higher than usual, I went right out at the centre of the roof and caught hold of the first object that presented itself to steady my descent. This first object happened to be the peak of Clickaclop's cap, and finding so many interesting novelties to observe as the Ogre stumbled along, I remained there for some time undiscovered; but attempting presently to escape, he felt me, and stuck me securely in the band, where I floated in great anguish of mind until I heard your melodious whistle. Oh, my Captain, then my heart gave a great bound and I espied you lurking amongst the reeds. From that moment I was happy. Soon you joined me in my irksome captivity, and we exchanged consolations until we arrived at the wonderful castle, where we are all once more reunited in a loving band of brother adventurers!"

It now only remained to inquire of Chickweed, whose black gown was in ribbons, how he and Snub came to be wandering so far from home and in so unprotected a condition—though belonging to the venerable society of Wiseacres—as to have fallen into the clutch of an Ogre. With visible reluctance the dejected wight entered into a hesitating account of himself, but encouraged by the great sympathy of Tuflongbo and his companions,

his spirits gradually revived and he was able to speak freely.

"When you departed on your adventures, magnanimous Tuflongbo," said he, "I for a brief space forgot my troubles in an old crow's nest, whither the kind-hearted Wild Sorrel had conveyed me. But when I had made myself master of the principles of its construction and the interest of it ceased, my sorrow and regret returned on me poignantly. I passed an exceedingly bad night. The following day it was my painful duty to give a lecture on chronology to the students of the highest form, and I muddled my dates in the most excruciating style. Rudbeakia justly reprimanded me, and not only that, but told me that it was my week to superintend the classes that did sums and problems. I will not wring your kind hearts by going into particulars—suffice it to say, that I ordered one of my pupils to divide two millions three thousand one hundred and nothing into the cube root of seventeen and a half decimal fractions of three farthings a piece; and that I asked another what would be the cost of fifty-two lambs' tails if a Wiseacre's tongue wagged foolishly three hundred and sixty-five times in the year? This last proposition was considered as disrespectful to the honourable society, and a deputation was sent, begging me to take my name off the books forth-

with. I but too joyfully complied! My aged guardian threw his wig into the fire, in sheer despair of my ever coming to honour; and Snub and I ran away in the night to escape his grievous reproaches, leaving our characters to the care of that witty fellow, Wild Sorrel, who, I know, will speak up for us with boldness and courage. We had been out only two days enjoying our liberty extravagantly, when Clickaclop came by and found us Beetle-hunting. 'Two more feathers for my Buzbuz!' cried he, and perched us on the peak of his cap. I can never sufficiently extol the courage of my faithful Snub, who supported me under these trying circumstances, and brought me safely through them; but for the beautiful balance he maintained in our perilous exaltation, I must inevitably have fallen to the ground, and have been dashed in pieces twenty times. We will never part as long as we live! Snub, my friend, where are you?"

Ay, where was Snub? where was he? Words almost fail me to tell where he was, his conduct had been so monstrous! *He was under the table worrying Buzbuz's dress-cap to tatters!* And he had worried it until she would not have known it again—no, not *even* in her *spectacles!* He had tried his teeth on Clickaclop's, too, but that was of tougher material, and was not much the worse;

but when his master, who had been extolling his virtue, and the band of Adventurers, understood the terrible extent of his misbehaviour, they were almost overwhelmed with dismay. It was next to impossible that Buzbuz could forgive the tragical ending of her sweet new cap, and nothing was apparently left to them but to make a hurried escape from the scene of its destruction ere she awoke!

## IX.

### DESPERATE CRISIS IN CLICKACLOP'S CASTLE.

"DEAR Chickweed, oblige me by at once laying an embargo on Snub!" cried the Leader, instantly confronting with firmness the new dangers that threatened himself and his followers.

So Snub was snatched from his prey, and plunged into his master's pocket, with only his nose out for air; and when he rebelliously struggled to get his liberty, Chickweed with his elbow squeezed him as if he were bagpipes, until his spirits fell, and he attained to a repentant frame of mind. It was of no use endeavouring to impress on him the mischief he had done, for though an intelligent

dog with regard to things on two legs or four, he had no sense whatever of the nature of dress-caps, unless, indeed, he cherished a secret animosity against all caps by reason of the misery a black one had inflicted on his beloved master.

Tuflongbo commenced operations by calling on all his band to unlock the great gates of the castle by blowing in a united blast through the keyhole, as they had seen Clickaclop do; but though they blew with the heartiest good-will, the gates stirred not an inch! They then tried using the spikes of their staves to force them open, but to no purpose whatever.

While thus engaged, hot and eager to effect their escape, they heard a terrible noise without, and all at once there came a loud knock, as of another Ogre knocking with his club! At this crisis, Tuflongbo's genius, almost dormant until now, suddenly fired up; he felt what must be *said*, and he *said* it; he saw what must be *done*, and he *did* it, without fear and without hesitation, proving himself master of the emergency on the instant.

"This knocking on the gates is the summons of an enemy!" said he. "No friend knocks so *loud*, so *long*, or so *late*—but our escape has, for the present, become impossible. We will, therefore, form an alliance, offensive and defensive, with Clicka-

clop and his amiable Ogress, and wake them up!"

"But how about Buzbuz, and her dress-cap?" whispered Chickweed, despondently.

"I shall persuade her that she is too young to wear one," replied Tuflongbo, and turned to more serious matters.

At this conjuncture the knocking was repeated very imperatively, and Clickaclop began to stir uneasily on his bed; Buzbuz moved also; and Tuflongbo sprang to the cupboard where all the heads were beginning to open their eyes in wonder and alarm, and besought them to come down and be screwed on without loss of time. At this urgent and unusual entreaty, they winked in a confused manner, till Buzbuz hastily snatched hers and fixed it in its place, after which she assisted Clickaclop, who was clumsily striving to help himself; so that at the third summons they were ready and collected, and beginning to gather their wits about them. Tuflongbo now breathed freely, and having formed his little band into a compact body behind the left wing of the gates, he admonished Chickweed to suppress Snub, lest he should prematurely burst out and spoil all; and waited with a mind calm, cool, and courageous, for the savage assailant who might every instant be expected to break his way in.

"Open the door!" growled a big voice through a chink; but the besieged stood firm to their posts, and declined.

"Have ready your staves!" said Tuflongbo, passing the word of command to his followers, who instantly obeyed.

There then ensued a pause of dead silence, during which you might have heard a pin drop. It was as if the enemy were taking counsel with himself how next to proceed, and as if Clickaclop and Buzbuz were endeavouring to overhear his thoughts. The pair looked exceedingly pale and alarmed, and the Leader of the Adventurers strove by many pantomimic gestures of valour and assurance, to dissipate their tremor, but all in vain; immense as they were in height and in girth, they did not seem to have the courage of mice, and now they were as nervous and fidgety as mice in a trap.

"Open the door!" again growled the big voice through the chink, and again the besieged maintained a silent defiance.

The patience of the enemy now appeared to be well nigh exhausted, and retiring a few paces off, he drove up against the gates with all his mighty bulk, and tried to burst them open; but they held fast, being sound oak and good iron.

A howl of vexation betrayed the foe's disappointment, and Buzbuz, on hearing it, whispered

fearfully under her breath, "Oh! patter, patter, patter, what shall we do? Tricks, trumps, and heeltaps, here's *Squintaskew!*"

Clickaclop pressed her hand, and would have spoken kind words of comfort had he been able, but his teeth chattered so exceedingly he could not get one out. The Ogress was not yet totally overcome, but tears as large as pennies rolled down her plump cheeks, and when the foe rushed exasperated on the gates a second time, she clasped her fingers, and made ready to take refuge in a fit of hysterics in case of the worst.

"Oh, Click, my Clickaclop, he's at the door! Don't you hear his howlings? Don't you hear his roar?" gasped she, in accents of terror. It would have been strange, indeed, had not Clickaclop heard them, for they made the welkin ring.

Squintaskew was evidently ignorant of the secret of the lock; for *seven* times did he bodily hurl his battering-ram against the gates, and *seven* times did he fail to make any impression on them. The Adventurers were now getting into the spirit of the assault, and really beginning to enjoy it; when during one fatally incautious moment, Snub got more than his nose out of Chickweed's pocket, and, being next the keyhole, barked through it with such vehemence that the doors sprang wide open, and Squintaskew, who happened at the iden-

tical instant to be driving up full tilt against them, fell headlong with an awful crash across the floor of the castle hall! Clickaclop and Buzbuz broke forth into shrieks of fear, but quick as thought, Tuflongbo manœuvred his followers over the prostrate foe, and while he was dizzied and confused with his catastrophe, made him a secure prisoner, linking his ancles to the columns of the gates and his wrists to the table-legs. Recalled to a sense of propriety, Buzbuz lent her aid, and Clickaclop did his little best, but without Tuflongbo and his gallant companions *all* would have been *lost!*

Up to the moment of this crisis, scarcely a word had been spoken amongst the Adventurers; but the Leader now gave them permission to cheer, which they did most triumphantly. Squintaskew writhed under the chorus, the more especially because they beat time to it, first with a tattoo, and then with a game of single-stick on his humiliated head; and being at last irritated beyond endurance, he threw it up, and made such a sour grimace, that all the milk in the neighbourhood crackt! Tuflongbo eyed him with natural curiosity, and drew his portrait, which was pronounced by critics so ugly and fearsome, that although it hangs in the National Gallery of Sheneland, it is felt judicious to have a veil before it, for fear of the Court Elves being shocked.

Their enemy being now safe, Clickaclop and Buzbuz thought of taking off their heads again, and finishing their interrupted night's rest, but Tuflongbo would not hear of such a dull proceeding, and reminded them politely of the duties of hospitality.

"We must leave you at daybreak," said he, "and we are *hungry!*"

At that word the heart of Buzbuz was softened, and she immediately declared that she would make them a noble feast.

It was no sooner said than done, and the table smoked with buttered eggs, toast and bacon; with partridge pie, roast pig, and damson tarts; with omelets, all sweet and savoury, and hasty-pudding, with plenty of delicious treacle. The Adventurers had not fared so well since they left home, and they enjoyed themselves exceedingly; to some of them the dainties receiving a new flavour from the agonized contortions of Squintaskew, who smelt the good things, but was not invited to share them. Tuflongbo, however, checked their mirth, reminding them that the brave could afford to be generous, and then, by way of setting a magnanimous example, he handed the conquered Ogre an enormous bowl of hot plum-porridge, which stood smoking under his nose all through breakfast, without his being any the better for it,

because his wrists were linked to the legs of the table, and he could not help himself. Snub showed him how to eat it, but his pride refused to profit by the lesson; and the shrewd animal, therefore, stowed the plum-porridge away in his own wallet, with the remark that it was a pity it should get cold and be wasted.

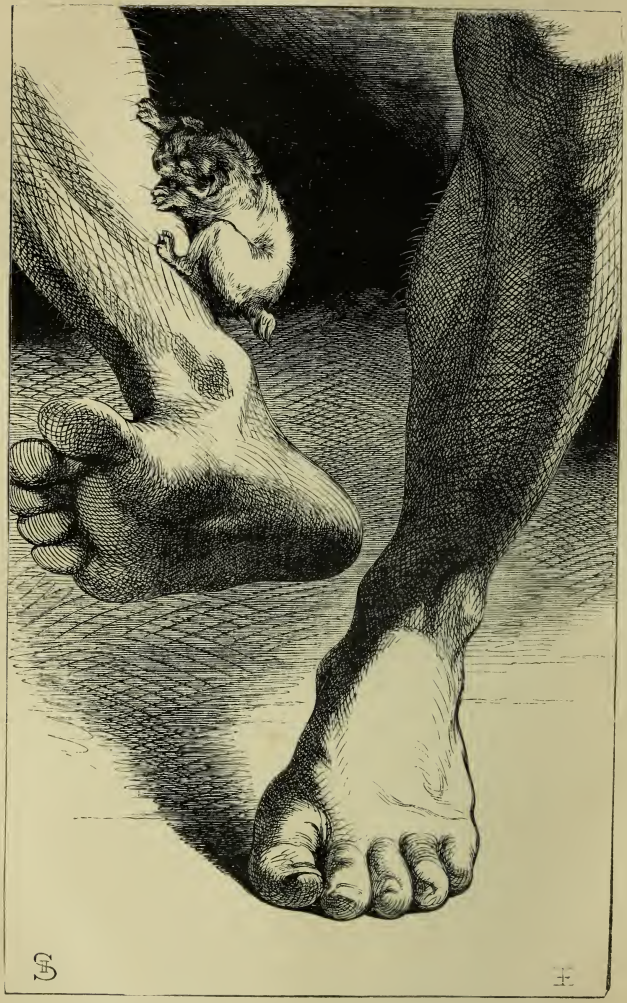
By this time the travellers were satisfied, and at the suggestion of the grateful Larkspur they danced a beautiful jig on the table to gratify Buzbuz, who laughed exceedingly: laughed, indeed, until she was obliged to hold her sides; but all at once her eyes fell on the fragments of her ruined cap, which Snub was touzling by way of relish after his breakfast. She then checked her mirth with a long-drawn sob, and having rescued the beautiful remains, pulled a long face as a preparation for tears; but the gallant Tuflongbo stayed the flood by chucking her airily under the chin, and asking why she should conceal her lovely florid locks, which must be the admiration of all beholders, under a cap fit only for her grandmother. The delicate compliment implied by his inquiry went straight to her susceptible heart, and from that day forward she cultivated curls instead of caps, which made her look at least ten years younger.

This anxious difficulty being thus disposed of,

Tuflongbo and his companions prepared to leave the castle, and Clickaclop shook hands all round with great gratitude between two drowsy nods. He was a very sleepy-headed fellow, a vegetarian, and a member of the Ogres' peace society, but well-meaning and respectable, though he would never put himself out of the way for anybody—not even for people who had done him incalculable services, such as he could never have accomplished for himself. But Buzbuz was of a more noble character; and by way of testifying her sense of the benefit the Adventurers had conferred upon her and her slumberous spouse, she offered to lend them her favourite palfrey, Heehaw, to carry them one stage on their journey.

The Leader expressed his thanks and cordial acceptance of her civility, and Heehaw being brought out in front of the castle gates, the large saddle of the Ogress was placed on his back, and the Adventurers forthwith mounted; Larkspur seating himself comfortably between his ears, and Chickweed and Snub being accommodated with places looking towards his tail. Tuflongbo had a conspicuous position on the crutch, and the rest of his followers grouped themselves behind him as conveniently as they could.

All was now ready to start, but first the Leader asked of Buzbuz, "What are you going to do



SNUB QUICKENS THE MOVEMENTS OF THE OGRE SQUINTASKEW. p. 155.

with that piece of lumber?" pointing to the still prostrate Squintaskew. Buzbuz looked puzzled, and said she did not know.

"Shall I get rid of him for you?" suggested Tuflongbo.

"Oh! if you would!" replied she, delighted.

"Sever his bonds then, and we will give him his order to march!" So the Ogress very gingerly loosed Squintaskew's ancles from the door-posts and his wrists from the table-legs, and retired to a safe distance to see what would happen next.

"Get up, you Squintaskew!" then cried the Captain of the Adventurers, "and go about your business!"

The frightful Ogre, whose eyes glared every way at once, heaved himself to his feet like an immense sack, and stood, sulky and threatening, at liberty. Tuflongbo gave him one moment to consider of it, and as he did not stir, but began to put on insolent airs of defiance, the Leader sternly said, "Snub, do your duty!" when Snub, who had only been waiting for the word, leapt down from his place on Heehaw's tail, and hurried, worried, scurried, tore and barked round the legs of Squintaskew with such ferocity, that he was glad to clap on his seven-leagued boots, and rush howling over the plain like a whirlwind until he

was out of sight, and Snub was a mere dancing speck in the distance!

The Adventurers waited for his return, and as soon as he was comfortably reinstated at his master's feet, Heehaw sounded the trumpet, and marched off amidst a chorus of farewells. Buzbuz wept at losing the merry company, but it was a fine morning, the sun was shining, and the country was beautiful, so that the spirits of the travellers were greatly exhilarated, and they looked forward to new adventures with eager desire. As they journeyed in this luxurious manner on the broad back of Heehaw, there was no call for exertion on their own parts; therefore Canary was invited to beguile the way with a song; in the chorus of which his comrades joined lustily.

"The sun is on the hill-top,
The dew is on the thorn,
Good-by to Clickaclop,
Welcome merry morn!
Blow a kiss to Buzbuz,
Send a Zephyr with it,
She was kind to all of us,
And she will forgive it!
Here we go merrily, merrily,
Here we go cheerily, cheerily,
Eight of us, and Snub makes nine!"

## X.

### THE HOSPITABLE AND COURTEOUS GRIFFINS.

When the Adventurers were tired of singing, they entered into conversation, and talked a great deal of philosophy; for it is wonderful how much more readily philosophy adapts itself to colloquial than to practical purposes. Heehaw was an excellent and patient beast for some time; but when he felt that he had gone far enough, he gave the travellers a gentle hint of his opinion by suddenly lying down and rolling over in the dust; then, kicking up his heels and roaring abominably, he scampered back to his stable like a wind broke loose, while each member of the gallant band lay sprawling on the ground. They were dismounted no less by their hobby Philosophy than by the ungracious Heehaw, for they rose with a considerable display of temper, and it was several moments before Tuflongbo's voice succeeded in calming their wrath and restoring discipline.

"Heehaw has an unmannerly way of expressing his wishes, it is true," said he; "but let us not emulate his lack of polish. Come, my friends, fall into line, and march forward! Save your breath to cool your next bowl of porridge. That

was excellent stuff Buzbuz made for us this morning. *Now*, fall in! Attention!—silence in the ranks!" And the habit of obedience prevailing over a natural desire to pursue and chastise the recreant palfrey, the Adventurers closed up two and two again, and journeyed on, their Captain stepping out alone in the van.

It was about noon when Heehaw turned them adrift, and they were approaching the borders of a vast forest, that appeared pathless in its gloom. Whether should they enter it or skirt it became now a paramount consideration, and Tuflongbo called a council to assist him in his decision. The Captain and his band formed a circle on a green bank, and were already deep in the debate, when they became aware of two Griffins drawing near, with fiery tails, curled at the tips. They were apparently taking a constitutional, for they sauntered leisurely along arm-in-arm, talking, as they sauntered, in the fashionable drawl. They wore horn spectacles in the highest mode; but one defect they had, and that a great one—they prevented the Griffins seeing any object unless it were presented close under their noses; and the consequence was that they did not detect the presence of the travellers upon their territory until they stumbled into the midst of the council that was sitting on the green bank.

"What's the matter, now? Who, pray, are you?" demanded the taller of the two strangers, in the utmost amazement.

"We are the Queen of Sheneland's Adventurers," replied the Leader, with becoming dignity.

"My respects to her Majesty, and I hope she enjoys good health. I have a great respect for her, and shall be proud if her gallant subjects will honour me at supper. Allow me to present my friend Rigituft. My name is Gantlett."

"Your courtesy charms me!" cried Tuflongbo. "We are honoured in accepting your noble hospitality!" And off they all went, Rigituft and Gantlett leading the way into the forest, with their fiery tails curled high in the air to act as torches, an ingenious contrivance, which elicited great applause from the travellers.

As they advanced into the wood, it became less dense than it had appeared at first sight, and broke away here and there into beautiful glades and long mysterious vistas of the most alluring aspect. Several of these the Adventurers passed by unexplored, until, at length, they came to a circular palace of crystal, at the doorway of which waited a number of slaves. As Gantlett and Rigituft appeared, they all performed kootoo in the most abject manner, and then waited in kneeling positions for the commands of their masters.

"Prepare a feast!" cried Rigituft, and instantly the slaves vanished like one shadow, swift, noiseless, obedient.

The gates of the splendid dwelling then slowly opened to the sound of sweetest music, and as Tuflongbo entered the hall with his followers, a dazzling lustre shone on their coats of chameleon cloth, and instead of being travel-stained and weary, they appeared all over of the loveliest and most resplendent hues. The pillars of the crystal hall were of lapis-lazuli and amber, the floor was mosaicked in gems, and the roof rose in a lofty dome, white and glittering as frosted silver. The whole palace was radiant and glorious as that of Queen Osmunda on the morning of her coronation, save that it lacked the presence of the bevies of bright Elves who smiled on that enchanting scene. And even *they* were not wanting long; for, as the slaves brought in the various dishes for the feast, there appeared also six exquisite Sprites, clad in dew-sparkling gossamer, and bearing wild-rose cups full of rain for the travellers to wash their hands! Tuflongbo, Chickweed, and all the band felt exceedingly dismayed; they had been brought up as gentlemen, and it went quite against their feelings to accept menial services from such lovely Elves. The Leader made them an elegant apology, and then, relieving them of

their burdens, he bade his followers wait on themselves, which they proceeded to do in the greatest confusion. Let it be remembered that since they left their homes after the farewell entertainment, they had seen no beauties at all; and this band of sister-sprites dawned on their unoccupied hearts and imaginations like a vision of Elfin Court in the wilds.

Tuflongbo had an instant presentiment of what would happen—and it *did* happen. Larkspur, Mustard, Chamomile, Larch, Canary, and Gooseberry immediately fell in love, and did not appear to know for the next quarter of an hour whether they were standing on their heads or their heels! At the end of that time, their ablutions having been performed with extreme haste and awkwardness, they took their seats at the hospitable board; Tuflongbo being placed at the right hand of Rigituft and Chickweed at the left of Gantlett. Behind *them* stood slaves, but behind each of the young adventurers who had fallen in love stood meekly the fair Elf of his choice.—Pearl behind Larkspur, Puff behind Mustard, Cherry behind Chamomile, Snow-Flake behind Larch, Flutter behind Canary, and Fleece behind Gooseberry, an arrangement of mingled pain and delight to their gallant and tender feelings.

"Fall to, my friends, and let us begin to enjoy

ourselves!" now cried Gantlett, and instantly everybody was served with delicious soup, which all absorbed with great gusto, until their faces shone, their eyes sparkled, and their spirits were quite exhilarated.

It was during an incautious moment, brought about by this genially expansive mood, that Tuflongbo happened to glance at his opposite entertainer, Gantlett, and to see him grinning from ear to ear in the most triumphant and malicious fashion. His suspicions of a snare were instantly awakened, and he gave a soft, low whistle, intimating to his comrades to be on their guard, but by no means to betray fear. Then, assuming an air of roystering gaiety, he made a feint of flinging himself with all his heart into the pleasures of the hour, and challenged Rigituft to a glass of claret. Rigituft filled his glass to the brim, and tossed it off with an air to the very good health of his friend; then Tuflongbo filled his and pretended to do likewise, but not a drop passed his lips. With the dexterity of a conjuror he flung the liquor over his shoulder full in the face of the treacherous slave who waited behind him, and put him so much out of countenance that he was obliged to retire precipitately. The Leader then pledged Gantlett in the same manner, and by a few secret words spoken in Faëriese,

suggested to Chickweed and the rest to follow his example, which they did; seeming to drink goblet for goblet with their hosts, but pouring all the claret under the table most self-denyingly, for it looked and smelt superb. It was, indeed, the very best tap in the Griffins' cellar; but they had put a wicked sleeping-powder in it.

The drinking-match was continued all through supper, which lasted three hours, and while Gantlett and Rigituft became every moment redder in the face, and rounder in the eyes, Tuflongbo and his brave little band remained as cool as cucumbers. At last the Griffins, stupidly bewildered by their own deep libations, and puzzled at the non-effect of the claret upon their guests, fell into a doze, then into a snore, and finally slid down in two ungainly bundles on the floor. Then up leapt Tuflongbo, and stamped out the flaming tip of Rigituft's torch-like tail, while Chickweed did the same by Gantlett's, and immediately it appeared that the hospitable and courteous Griffins were neither more nor less than Ogres in disguise.

"We are delivered from our cruel captivity," exclaimed the lovely Elves in one sweet ringing chorus, and they crowded round Tuflongbo to kiss his hands in their gratitude. He received their expressions of delight with gentle civility, and then consigned each one singly to the care of

his people, while he considered what next it would be most expedient to do under these very surprising circumstances.

"We have had proof enough that these Ogres are a treacherous race," said he. "Shall we prosecute our discoveries amongst them, or shall we go elsewhere in search of adventures? Chickweed, my worthy friend, what do you advise?"

"Permit me first to ask how these fair Elves are to be disposed of—it will not be fitting to carry *them* through the hardships that are mere trifles to *us*. Shall we send them home to Elfin Court under the charge of my faithful Snub?"

At this unpractical and unfeeling proposition, a general murmur arose amongst the juniors of the band, and Chickweed was instantly sneered down as a person who knew nothing whatever about delicate matters. He therefore subsided into silence, and examined the structure of Gantlett's smouldering tail while the rest talked over the present emergency.

## XI.

### THE CAPTIVE ELVES.

"TELL us, bright Pearl, how it happens that we find you with so many beautiful companions held in durance vile by Rigituft and Gantlett?" said Tuflongbo, desirous of all the useful information he could get.

"We were beguiled hither by the promise of a lovely ball, as you were beguiled by the anticipation of a great feast," was the answer. "It was on a midsummer night that the disguised Ogres met us not far from the Enchanted Bower; and after a little conversation they placed us on magic steeds which flew through the air like the wind, and never stopped nor stayed until we dismounted here. There was a ball, 'tis true, and strange partners who danced us almost to death, but since that dreadful night we have lived in dulness and misery unparalleled. Many victims have been since decoyed hither, and enrolled amongst the Ogres' mobs of slaves; but never before has there been one brave enough to save himself or rescue us, as you have done! The charm of the Griffins to fascinate beholders, lay in the curled flames of their tail-tips, and now that you have stamped

and crushed them out, their power is gone; and when they come to themselves in the morning, they will be no better or stronger than the common Ogres who go undisguised."

A dreadful sound, half groan, half angry roar, here interrupted the fair Pearl's dainty speech, and Chickweed was seen to jump up, shake his fingers vehemently, and to glance with doubtful tremor towards Tuflongbo.

"What are you about now?" cried the Leader, advancing towards him where he stood over the prostrate Gantlett.

"I wanted it for my museum of curiosities," replied he, exhibiting a portion of the Griffin's tail which he had rather unskilfully amputated at the seventh joint. "It burnt my fingers—I did not suppose it would retain heat so long."

"You are welcome to it," said Tuflongbo, coolly; "perhaps you had better take off also the tip of Rigituft's, to be presented on our return to the natural history collection of Sheneland—it is not rich in combustible tails, I believe."

"Very poor, on the contrary—that is the finest specimen extant," responded Chickweed, happy in his acquisition, and then he proceeded to operate on Rigituft, as he had already done on the insensible Gantlett, and with equal success.

Meanwhile, the six Elves and the six susceptible

Adventurers had been talking over their own private affairs in tender whispers, so that when Tuflongbo returned to them, he found matters approaching settlement without his assistance. He, however, went through the form of suggesting that the lovely Sprites should be conveyed to the first station on the boundaries of civilization, and there committed to the care of the earliest escort that might offer itself, to restore them to their friends and families. At this, each bright face became a cloud, and a mournful silence ensued, which Canary presently broke.

"Great Tuflongbo, high exalted above the reach of Elfin dreams, and loves, and sentiments; noble Tuflongbo, a vowed bachelor for Queen Osmunda's sake, exercise your sympathy for weaker-minded folks!" cried he, with cheerful enthusiasm. "We are the best friends these lovely Sprites possess; we are their deliverers, their brave admirers, their devoted protectors! Us they approve, us they esteem, us they affectionately love—why then should we be parted any more?"

The Leader looked painfully puzzled, and Chickweed curled up a most sarcastic nose, while the Elves smiled sweetly, and the six sentimental Adventurers anxiously waited their Captain's reply. Tuflongbo's position was a difficult one, but a few

moments' reflection enabled him delicately to evade his dilemma.

"Why should you be parted any more?" repeated he, echoing Canary's buoyant tone. "Why, indeed! We are sure to go into wild woods and forests, where gossamer would come to grief; but, then, each of you, my soft-hearted lovers, has a spare suit of corduroy in his knapsack, and if the pretty Elves will condescend to wear them, they can accompany our expedition as Amazons, and I do not doubt but they will do deeds of valour to surprise us all."

O wily Tuflongbo! He knew well enough how the gentle creatures would weep and call him *monster,* and then give their own practical and prudent minds to a solution of the puzzle of their disposal. They consulted apart for a few moments, and then Puff, being chosen spokeswoman, stood forward, and said eloquently,—

"Far be it from us, Tuflongbo, to embarrass the march of your band; as Amazons, we cannot travel with you, for all of us are liable to faint; gossamer is our proper wear—corduroy we leave to stronger-minded Elves. Let us, therefore, be taken under the charge of your followers to the nearest civilized abode, and there placed until you all return home, covered with honour and glory, when we will welcome you back with glee, and

make our dear friends happy to their hearts' content."

A modified applause followed this oration, and Tuflongbo declared that it was impossible to have spoken more wisely under the circumstances than Puff had done. And the matter being thus settled, preparations were made to leave the crystal palace of the Griffins, before they recovered their impaired faculties. The Elves having found walking-shoes and put them on, and warm mantles over their light robes, declared themselves ready to start; and they started accordingly, leaving Gantlett and Rigituft still prostrate on their own floor. It was observed by Tuflongbo in departing, that all the ranks of abject slaves had fled—forsaking their masters in misfortune, as slaves always do; and before day dawned, he and his followers, with their dear incumbrances, were all safe out of the gloomy forest.

## XII.

### THE TERRIBLE RESULTS OF FLIGHT.

Tuflongbo and his band, with all their pretty sweetings, were safe out of the gloomy forest, it is true, but a new and immediate danger confronted

them the moment they left the shelter of the trees. A host of Giant-Ogres, with shields and spears, were advancing in regular order over the plain, covered with dabs of war-paint, and sounding their terrible battle-cry until the whole air rang with it, and the forest shook again, as if a mighty wind were rising amidst its branches.

The Leader made haste to manœuvre his gallant followers into a circle round the Elves, and then stood on the defensive, regretting exceedingly that his movements were embarrassed by so much lovely gossamer that it was impossible for him to make an assault, as his ardour would otherwise have led him to do.

"The most convenient accident that could happen to us now would be that these tremendous Ogres should elevate their noses in the air and pass us by unseen," whispered he in the ear of Chickweed. "They are evidently on the war-trail of the Griffins whom we have extinguished; and far be it from me, by any inopportune obtrusiveness, to change their minds."

"Shall we hide ourselves?" suggested Chickweed.

"By no means—Tuflongbo scorns concealment," was the instant reply. "Flight and concealment are equally against my principles. What are my people talking about so eagerly? Can unworthy

thoughts of retreat have occurred to *them!* Oh! shame! shame!"

The great Adventurer stampt with rage and contempt when he found that visions of safety had displaced visions of glory with his fascinated band, and he expressed his sentiments in the most cutting phrases in all his vocabulary.

"Put on mob-caps, ye valiant heroes that talk of flight!" cried he, pointing the finger of scorn at his six trembling followers. "Through the wood with you, like scared pigeons, white-feather-crested for ever more!"

"Be not so wrath, magnanimous Tuflongbo!" pleaded Gooseberry. "What can we expect but instant destruction if we remain here and await the approach of this terrible horde of barbarians? Our old enemies Gulmalog and Squintaskew may be amongst them, and what will be our fate *then?*"

"Consider also our beauteous Elves, noble Captain," urged Larkspur. "*We* might go to the attack and fall or conquer without much care; but what shall we do with *them*—how provide for their safety while we are in danger?"

Tuflongbo could have given utterance to some most ungallant expressions, but he put a restraint on himself and forbore.

"If none but the brave deserve the fair, you

will lose your honour, and your pretty sweetings too," said he, coldly. "Pearl, Puff, Cherry, Snow-Flake, Flutter, and Fleece, will never bestow their love upon Fairies of the White-Feather. Get under their mantles *now*, and they will laugh you to scorn by-and-by. Make haste —the Ogres are almost upon us!"

And so they were; and, as Gooseberry suggested, Gulmalog and Squintaskew marched at the head of them, looking most hideously tragical. Up to this critical moment, Snub had kept himself modestly in the background, but the instant he espied his old foe whom he had so ignominiously routed, he sprang forth in spite of Chickweed's remonstrances, and dashing straight at Squintaskew's protuberant calves, fixed his fangs in them, and there hung like a thirsty leech. Tuflongbo bravely stood his ground, supported by Chickweed alone; for the moment Snub made his impetuous charge, Larkspur, Larch, Gooseberry, Canary, Mustard, and Chamomile ran away, each bearing off his beautiful bit of gossamer in his recreant arms! The Leader saw their flight with great disgust, and muttered that he hoped they would not find themselves out of the frying-pan into the fire—which, alas! they almost immediately did. Hovering in the air was a marvellous Magic Kite, that had been watching for prey all the

morning, and now that the Adventurers were without a Captain, it saw a fine opportunity for taking them. Down it swooped in one splendid pounce, and, alighting before their astounded eyes, gave them to understand that if they would tie themselves in bundles on to his tail, which was scarcely heavy enough for steady flight, it would bear them far away from fear of Ogres, and of all other dangers, to a halcyon spot, where they might live happily ever afterwards. In an evil hour they listened to its beguiling, and being slung two and two along its tail of string, they closed their timid eyes and committed themselves to its beneficent protection. Chuckling all over, and visibly —it could not do so within, because it was only one thickness of silver paper—the Magic Kite rose high into the air, and after a dozen or so giddy and erratic gyrations, it poised itself for a long flight, and flew straight across by a short cut over into the desolate and savage regions of Wildwaste! Tuflongbo and Chickweed beheld the catastrophe, and, wringing their hands, exclaimed, "Oh! unhappy wights, unhappy wights! ye know not whither ye are gone!"

Their attention was then called off to their own position, and that of the reckless Snub, who was keeping the entire body of Ogres at bay by his outrageous howlings and barkings. The big fel-

lows poked at him with their spears, and skipped from one leg to the other as he made his repeated attacks, until at last they were quite out of breath and ready to come to terms.

"It is of no use taking these Fairykins prisoners —they are too good to be eaten," growled Gulmalog. "I've had experience of them already. Don't let us waste time here, lest Rigituft and Gantlett effect an escape before we reach their crystal palace."

"You will find Rigituft and Gantlett extinguished," cried Tuflongbo, unable to resist the triumph of telling the tale of his victory.

"Who extinguished them?" demanded Squintaskew.

"*We* did," replied Chickweed, and exhibited the amputated joints of their combustible tails in proof thereof.

At this announcement the Ogres gave a united whistle of triumph, and lauded the bold Adventurers up to the skies.

"Ask any favour that is in our power to grant, and it is yours!" exclaimed Gulmalog. "Oh! you brave little jewels, you were indeed too good to be eaten—a lucky fate it was that rescued you! But where are all the rest?—there were seven of you."

"Ah! where indeed?" echoed the Leader, in a

mournful tone. "Where, indeed? They have unwisely put faith in a Magic Kite instead of relying on their own courage and their Captain's skill, and it has borne them straight over to Wildwaste."

"Serve 'em right," snarled Squintaskew, who was of a cruel and malignant disposition. "I hope Slink will worry them!"

"Silence, Squintaskew!" interposed the more generous Gulmalog. "The brave Tuflongbo and the eccentric Chickweed have put out our rampant foes, the fiery-tailed Griffins; and by all the laws of courtesy and honour, one good turn surely deserves another. Speak, gallant Fairykins, what grace shall we do you in return for extinguishing Gantlett and Rigituft?"

"Give us a safe pass into the country of your cousins the Giants, that we may go to the rescue of our misguided comrades," said Tuflongbo; and Chickweed seconded his request.

"That is soon done," answered Gulmalog, and drawing forth his tablets he wrote thereon certain cabalistic letters which signified—"Let these gentlemen pass in security and honour;" and Tuflongbo having stowed the precious document in his wallet, Snub was bidden to leave his ankular investigations amongst the Ogres and to come away, which he reluctantly did. The two deserted

Adventurers then took a sad farewell of their new friends, and went on their sorrowful way towards the savage land of the Giants.

## XIII.

### THE COMBAT OF THE CRUMPLECUES.

Tuflongbo and Chickweed beguiled their solitary journey, which lasted twelve dull days and twelve pitch-black nights, by as much cheerful conversation as could be expected under their deplorable circumstances. Wildwaste was as yet an unexplored region—no amateur traveller having ever ventured into its dreadful deserts. It therefore behoved Tuflongbo and Chickweed to keep very cool in preparation for the tremendous dangers, and difficulties that might there await them. On the thirteenth day, by a cold change in the atmosphere, they received warning of their approach to savage regions. Both expressed themselves as calm and quite at ease in their feelings, and then by a most inconveniently narrow defile they proceeded to work their way into Wildwaste.

At the inner mouth of the Pass they found seated on guard three enormous Giants—Slink,

Slouchback, and Lumba, to whom Tuflongbo, bowing with lofty dignity, presented himself as Adventurer to the Queen of Sheneland, and his companion as a late member of the Royal Society of Wiseacres.

"That may be all very true, but what is your business *here?*" demanded the gruff Slink.

"Our business is to recover six Fairykins and their bits of gossamer," replied the great Captain. "Twelve dull days and twelve pitch-black nights ago, a Magic Kite flew over hither with them. We were all journeying in Ogreland together, and they fled before the face of Gulmalog and Squint-askew, for whom fortune put it in our power to do a vital service. In return for it Gulmalog gave us this passport which I have now the honour of presenting to your monstrous worships." And thus speaking, Tuflongbo brought out the leaf of the Ogre's tablets, inscribed as before stated; and the three Giants having narrowly examined it, pronounced the document genuine, and bade them good speed on their way.

"You can go; all right—and luck go with you!" said they; and the Adventurers shouldered their walking-sticks and marched forward, delighted with the powerful trio's unexpected urbanity.

"It is wise to cultivate politeness and to be

on civil terms even with savages: live and make allies," remarked Tuflongbo.

"So it is," responded Chickweed; "let me enter that axiom in my note-book." He did so, and dated it; and a hundred times more, as they fared on their anxious way, did he pull out his precious little volume and set down valuable observations. *Now* it was a geological fact, *then* a curious speculation in entomology, and next a query in botany. Tuflongbo aided him with many suggestions; and it appeared probable that their travels in Wildwaste would not prove the least interesting part of the great journey.

"I wonder whether we shall be believed when we come to relate all our wonderful adventures before the Royal Society of Wiseacres, or whether they will pooh-pooh our stories as mere travellers' tales?" observed he presently. "We won't buoy ourselves up with too sanguine expectations, for they are always averse to credit anything new."

"Look, Tuflongbo, look!" here impatiently interposed Chickweed. "What is that right away above the clouds—is it the Magic Kite?"

"Yes, yes; it is the Magic Kite!" answered the Leader; and his heart gave a great leap of joy. "Whistle, Chickweed, whistle as loud as ever you can, to bring it down!" So they both stood still and whistled with all their might, until

the Magic Kite, after tossing its tail thrice with the utmost glee, came floating along the wind, full before them. They saw its broad transparent body all giggling, but its tail was limp and slender; and neither the white-feather Fairies nor their bits of gossamer were there!

"What have you done with my people?—what have you done with my people, Magic Kite?" shouted Tuflongbo, when this disappointing end of his hopes became apparent.

"I left them playing nine-pins in the Crumplecues' Den!" was its mocking answer. "Don't worry or fuss yourselves; it takes all the pleasantness out of your lives. I am very well, thank you; hope you're the same. Good-by!" And, with another toss of its odious tail, up into the sky it whirled once more; while the Adventurers plodded heavily on, talking as they went on things in general.

They were just in the heat of an argument as to the best way of tossing pancakes—for which delicacy Chickweed had confessed a weakness—when suddenly there arose, not many paces off, a most terrific hullaballoo, and, advancing steadily towards the scene of tumult, they hid behind a convenient mass of rock; and thence they saw two monstrous Crumplecues engaged in a hand-to-hand fight. These Crumplecues, be it understood,

are of the order of Dragons—a desperate and warlike race, concerning whom the chronicles of Sheneland are almost silent. They are supposed to be descended from a younger branch of the family of Rufnagumba, and their favourite haunts are on the lower slopes of the Skihi mountains. It was near the base of one of the most lofty peaks in the range that the present encounter was taking place.

It was with the utmost difficulty that Snub, whose disposition was naturally belligerent, was prevented from joining in, and twice Tuflongbo had cautiously to admonish his master to repress his feelings; for the moment Chickweed caught his first glimpse of Dragons combating, he began to skip from one foot to the other, to turn round, clap his hands, fling up his cap, and shriek, as if possessed by the intoxicating concentrated essence of delight; and, indeed, the spectacle was a very impressive one for strangers to Dragons.

Tuflongbo took the business coolly, and was in no wise dismayed at witnessing the blind rage of the Crumplecues; for they seemed too deeply absorbed in settling their own feud to have any attention to spare for indifferent persons. When the travellers first came in sight of them, the combatants were locked together by the tusks, their strong webbed hands clutched each the other's

throat, and their eyes glittered under their scaly brows like lumps of red-hot coal. The noise with which they accompanied the struggle was truly fearsome. It consisted of a series of shrill "Eheus," rising successively in a minor scale, which quavered off into a loud whistling roar, then dropt into a strangled groan, only to swell up again more piercingly than ever. A sound it was to chill the marrow in almost any bones, but Tuflongbo and Chickweed, fired with adventurous enthusiasm, heeded it no more than a puff of wind; and though Wildwaste quivered to its centre, they did nothing but rejoice.

For some time longer they lurked round the corner of their crag, and watched the progress of the battle securely; but at length the rapture of Chickweed betrayed him into flinging out his arms and legs in such extravagantly triumphant manœuvres, that they caught the astonished eye of the elder Crumplecue, and changed the scene in an instant from the lowest comedy to tragedy the most disastrous. Before Tuflongbo could interpose by word or deed, the Dragon left his natural foe to finish the fight alone, dashed at the audacious Chickweed, and abbreviated his merry antics by seizing on the collar of his jacket, and lightly tossing him up over his head, where he hung deplorably surprised, and hardly able to make

out where he was. But the Crumplecue did not leave him long in suspense; for, as soon as he had made his prisoner secure, he indulged in another shrill hullaballoo, and then set off at a lively canter with him up to his den on the mountains of Skihi.

Ere he was out of sight, and ere Tuflongbo had time to spend one regret on this second most doleful catastrophe, the other Crumplecue became aware of the great Adventurer standing alone and unsupported within his reach. Instantly he snatched him up, tossed him on his head, and set off in the wake of his late enemy, as fast as twelve short waddling legs would carry him. His tail curled crisply with pride to its very tip; and when his captive ventured to suggest that two valiant Crumplecues would have found finishing their fight much better sport than stealing inoffensive travellers, he politely explained that they were perfect friends, and only fighting for amusement; while to catch a brace of Fairykins astray near the Skihi mountains was such a rare piece of good luck in their monotonous existence, that they could by no means permit it to pass unimproved.

Tuflongbo's bearer soon overtook the other Crumplecue, with poor Chickweed and Snub in his pocket, clinging to his ears. The next mo-

ment he was ahead of him, and then the hapless young Wiseacre began to learn in good earnest what a painful thing a game at "follow my leader" may be when played in the land of Giants and Dragons, with Tuflongbo and two Crumplecues for playfellows. I can assure you he was quite as much astonished as delighted—perhaps rather more; for his position was eminently uncomfortable, and nearly all the breath was shaken out of his body. Also Snub was vexatiously noisy, nearly barking himself inside out with vain rage, which gave his master a longing to beat him into silent philosophy. All his trials notwithstanding, he contrived to keep up his spirits miraculously; and if now and then a doleful thought crossed his mind, it soon disappeared before lively ideas of the surprise and mortification he should inflict on his former brother Wiseacres when he came to lecture them on his wonderful adventures and discoveries.

It was by a most rugged road that the Crumplecues went, and their peculiarly irregular gait made the effects of it all the worse for their hapless prisoners. Tuflongbo fared best; he was already getting seasoned to adversity; besides, he had gone through so many hazards, and accomplished so many hair-breadth escapes, that he could comfort himself with the reflection that the pre-

sent reverse of fortune would not last long; and, while it did last, everything strange and novel in it was only so much more of fact and fancy to store away in his wallet for the future delight of Elfin Court and his juvenile friends. And another thing, he expected he was on the high-way to rejoin his recreant band, engaged in their shameful game at nine-pins in the Crumplecues' den. If he could win them back to the path of honour and duty, any suffering would be more than compensated for.

When Chickweed had fully realized his perilous and painful position, he braced his courage up to endure it, and the invincible courage of his curiosity and good spirits bore him through gallantly. As long as he was within earshot of the Leader, Tuflongbo cheered him with homely proverbs fitted to the the occasion; but by-and-by his voice failed to reach him, and, craning up his neck, he saw his Captain on the point of vanishing within the yawning arch of a deep cavern. Five minutes after the Crumplecue's head had disappeared, his haughtily curled tail remained in sight—a fact which will give a clearer notion of his size than any more lengthy or laboured description. Chickweed's bearer made direct for the same opening, and when he plunged into its damp and hideous gloom, the young Wiseacre felt precisely

as if he was going straight down into the bowels of the earth. Indeed, the Crumplecues' subterranean abode did extend, with innumerable ramifications, all under the range of the Skihi mountains, and, having no outlet to the upper air, it was incomparably black and dreary. Twice or thrice, as they rushed on through the blind darkness, Chickweed heard, or fancied he heard, Tuflongbo's encouraging whistle; and at last, to his infinite relief and comfort, he found himself alongside of him, his Crumplecue having run himself quite out of breath.

"Well, Chick, how are you now?" inquired the more experienced Adventurer, in a tone of profound sympathy.

"Thank you, Tuflongbo, I am as well as can be expected under the circumstances," was the poor jolted fellow's cheerful reply.

"That is all right; that is the way to get on, both in Sheneland and Wildwaste. Keep up a good heart, and nothing ever gets to the worst."

"This is a very strange and wonderful place. I wish we had cats' eyes and could see in the dark," said the inquiring Chickweed.

"I can lend you a pair. I never travel without, in case of emergency," replied Tuflongbo; and the young Wiseacre, having received them

from his outstretched groping hand, fitted them on carefully, and began to peer about in his inquiring, intelligent way, that suffered nothing worthy of note to escape his scrutiny.

It took him a few moments to accustom himself to the metallic glare of his new organs of vision; but that once accomplished, he made his observations with great care and accuracy. In the first place, he perceived a marine flavour in the cavern, the walls of which were festooned with dripping weed and tangle similar to those found on the sea shore. There was no splendour such as he expected, no glittering pillars of crystal or lamps of gems; nothing but black and grey rocks, and trickling, slimy water running down the walls. The roof was filled with the noiseless flight of innumerable bats, and the ground was slippery with oozing mud. "This is a horrible, dull hole," then said he. "I don't care, Tuflongbo, how soon we are out of it."

No sooner had he spoken than the scene was suddenly transformed. The overhanging walls retired, the roof sprang up into thousands of interlacing arches, the floor gleamed in a polished sheet of marble, and a soft light appeared, suffusing the air with a delicious, perfumed warmth. Chickweed put his cats' eyes in his pocket and resumed his own, the better to enjoy the beautiful

revelations that seemed about to open on his astonished imagination.

The Crumplecues now paused and sat down, leaning their backs wearily against vast beds of dried reeds; and the captive Adventurers took this opportunity of sliding down from their perilous positions, and of shaking themselves straight in their clothes. This brief toilette concluded, they crept close to each other, and, gazing round, perceived a circle of six lovely Mermaids coiled up on their dolphin-tails, combing their sea-green hair. A second glance convinced them that these Mermaids were no other than the rescued Elves transformed—poor bits of gossamer washed-out—Pearl, Puff, Cherry, Snow-Flake, Flutter, and Fleece. Their looking-glasses were each composed of one bright ripple set in a rim of silver-crisped foam, and supported by tiny coral crabs. Round their white throats gleamed strings of pearls, and all their eyes shone with a half-sweet, half-sly serenity. Tuflongbo raised his peaked cap to them with superb courtesy, and then gazed about for his deluded followers, whom he detected lurking in a corner, playing, as the Magic Kite had stated, a game at nine-pins; and a most dejected, miserable amusement it was, to judge from their flat and crest-fallen countenances. He forbore to notice them then, and gave them time

to recover their buoyancy, which they did by degrees, when they saw their Leader again before them. Sadly, sadly had they suffered in their absence from him!

When the exquisite Mermaids had combed their sea-green hair until it was as smooth and sleek as satin, they began to sing, and sang entrancingly that song which sighs in shells that have been stolen away from the shore. They had but one melody, and that was it—a melody so softly monotonous that it rocked the tired captives to sleep, and when they awoke again the gentle choir had vanished; but the two Crumplecues were still there, eating their supper of turtle and oyster-sauce in a greedy, hungry fashion, as the manner of Crumplecues is.

"Do you think they will offer us anything to eat, Tuflongbo?" whispered Chickweed.

"I don't expect they will. Hospitable Dragons would have helped strangers first," was the discouraging answer.

"They won't give you a crumb; they have kept us on nothing a-day ever since they caught us, when we were dropt by the Magic Kite," here interposed Larkspur, humbly.

"We have had cruel usage," added Larch; and each of the other White-Feather Fairykins spoke to the same effect; and, to the honour of

the magnanimous Tuflongbo, he neither reminded them that it was nobody's fault but their own, nor told them how much they had deserved the disasters of which they now complained. He said to them no single word of blame, but regarded their blank and haggard countenances with a true pity and consideration; and at length proposed giving the Crumplecues the slip, and stealing quietly away while they were busy with their suppers. All his band, only too eager to return to their allegiance, agreed to his proposition with as much applause as their weak state allowed; and, watching their opportunity, they succeeded in getting into the rear of the absorbed Crumplecues, who made so much unnecessary noise in engulfing their turtle and oyster-sauce, that the creaking of the adventurers' shoes escaped their notice; then, taking the first mysterious passage that presented itself, they set off running as hard as they could go; and when the Crumplecues looked about for their prisoners, to entertain them while they loitered over their dessert of shrimps and winkles, they were a full league away.

"I should like to have another peep at those curious Mermaids, Tuflongbo, should not you?" asked Chickweed, whose curiosity revived in proportion as the risks of pursuit lessened. "How

was it they were transformed from Elves to Dolphin Tails, I wonder."

"I believe they always were dolphin tails," cried Chamomile, angrily. "That was why they led us into mischief. As soon as we were safe in this dreadful den, their lovely forms vanished, and when they appeared, it was in their odious, natural shape. They mocked at us cruelly then; called us white-feather fairykins and all manner of hard names. I daresay they have not done with their beguilements yet. Oh, my bright Cherry, how art thou transformed!" A wail, as of an Elf bitterly weeping, answered him; but while he yet started and listened, it wound up with a rippling sound of Mermaids' laughter.

"It is a pity we ever rescued them out of the Griffin's Palace," sighed Canary, and a sob echoed his voice, then a taunt.

Tuflongbo was sorely puzzled what to think of these double mysterious sounds. Could it be that the wicked sea-sprites, jealous of Elfin beauty, had enchanted their rivals asleep, and then, taking some likeness to their faces, had made the lost adventurers believe that they were their sweet prizes won out of the hands of Rigituft and Gantlett? It was possible; but he would not mention his suspicion yet, lest he should prematurely awaken false hopes; and the lesson of their sorrow and

disappointment was therefore left for some time longer to sink into their anxious, troubled minds. One word he spoke, however, and that was to bid them beware if they fell in with the Mermaids again, which was more than probable.

"They are a treacherous race," said he, "but our craft is sufficient to circumvent their subtlety. It has long been my wish to visit their deep-sea caves; and from the way the land lies, I expect we are on the eve of an opportunity now. I hear their beautiful song again. Do not you? Listen."

All the adventurers listened, and heard it too. Then a fresh salt air blew in their faces, growing gradually sweeter and warmer, until they espied what looked in the distance like a lance of flame. Drawing nearer, they saw that it was a narrow vertical split in the rocks, and creeping sideways through it, they found themselves, to their great joy and astonishment, on the golden sands of the glorious Balmy Isles, where King Cloves reigned, and where, many years after, Sir Arum went to live when he married the beautiful and glad-hearted Princess Myrrh.

The blue sky was blazing with noontide splendour, and the tide was rolling boldly in over the ragged reefs of rocks that fringe the islands with a line of natural fortresses; while round about a deep gleamy pool, played the Mermaids, still

singing and combing their sea-green hair, as they did in the Crumplecues' Den. As their susceptible victims approached, they feigned not to see them, and went on with their plaintive chant, looking serenely sweet and sly, until they were close on the edge of their bathing-pool, when they broke into gestures of delighted surprise, and held out friendly hands to bid them welcome. They were now eight in number, and Tuflongbo frankly gave his hand to one of the fair witches: it was softly yet securely grasped, and immediately Chickweed and the rest were caught, the Mermaids changed their slow melody to a song of triumph, and floating round in a dizzy, spiral dance, they carried their charmed captives down, down, *down*, into the purple depths of the sea, and cast them faint and exhausted on the shining silver sands of their ocean caves. Tuflongbo was willing to incur some risks for the sake of investigating such wonders of the water-world as are not fatally forbidden to Elfin eyes; but at this moment consciousness forsook him, and he heard no sound but the sound of the waves, moaning, incessantly moaning, as they moan in the song-haunted shells that have been carried away from the sea!

THE SEA-KING AND HIS COURT.

## XIV.

### IN THE DEEP-SEA CAVES.

This ocean cave was a marvellously beautiful place. Tuflongbo and his companions awoke to find themselves tenderly laid on a soft foam-wreath under the vast green arches of the on-flowing billows. Here there was perpetual change, and each change surpassed in enchanting loveliness all that had gone before. It was like a dream—a vision. In all their wonderful adventures, never had they beheld any scene more magically splendid. There was light, but none could tell whence it glowed; there was warmth, there was murmuring music; and there were colours that went and came on the springing columns and arches as come and go the rainbow reflections on April cloud.

Upon a quaint throne, which looked like the phantom of a ship, incrusted with pearl, sate the weird Sea-King, his Court of Mermen and Mermaids gathered around him; behind, were heaped the rich spoils of a thousand wrecks. His sceptre was an anchor of gold, broken; his crown a circlet of iron, jewelled with tears. Under his feet crouched Storm and Tempest, watching with wild

eyes for their hour of freedom. *Now* they lay bound like slaves, with the strained cables, which in their moments of power and fury, they could have snapt like silken threads.

While the Adventurers gazed on this strange assemblage with feelings of inexpressible awe, there sounded suddenly a voice from above, rolling in the vaulted stillness like an echo of thunder. Storm and Tempest half rose and dragged at their chains; and when a great shout broke over the sea of the winds let loose, they cried hoarsely, "We must go! we must go! They are calling to us! they are calling to us with a thousand tongues!" But the King smote them down to the sands again, and they humbled themselves once more at his feet, muttering out threats and curses as they fell.

Again through the solemn depths pealed the long summons, and the blast of it blew sadly in the Ocean Cave. Mermen and Mermaids stood waiting obedient—those who had beguiled the Adventurers amongst the rest — their watchful eyes on the King, whose face began to darken as darkens the sky when thunder broods over it, then flashed as flashes the lightning from the heart of the black cloud. And for a little while longer there lay upon all an anguish of silence and suspense.

Then the deep walls and arches of the Cave heaved and swelled, the silver sands broke up in

tumultuous heaps, the phantom-throne swayed for an instant, then toppled from its giddy height, and the freed slaves sprang up, bursting their bonds like tow. The King vanished, his golden sceptre of an anchor broken, and his crown, jewelled with tears, floated away; Mermen and Mermaids disappeared together, weeping, and chanting a dirge, and Storm and Tempest reigned tyrants over the sea.

They churned it into foam, they lashed it into fury; they lifted up its mighty waves, and flung them against the clouds that came down to meet them, all ragged, frantic, and wild. They saw a ship beaten by the cruel waves, and joined them, and gave chase until they drove it on the rocks; then they broke it up and cast its spars upon the beach, and drowned its crew: and that night there were shed tears enough to jewel a thousand Sea-Kings' crowns!

When the wild hurricane arose, Tuflongbo and his companions gave themselves up for lost, and clasping hands, they drifted away, swiftly, swiftly, their eyes closed but their thoughts clear, until out of the darkness that enwrapt them, there gradually grew the hazy light of morn; when they found themselves washed up once more on the strand of the Balmy Isles, which looked now quite lonely and deserted, but was strewn with

tangle and seaweed of all kinds, such as are left behind amongst fragments of wreck when Storm and Tempest have worked their will and gone back to the Deep-Sea Caves.

## XV.

### A BLISSFUL REUNION.

The gallant Leader and Chickweed congratulated themselves and each other upon this happy issue of their adventure with the Mermaids; but Larch, Larkspur, Mustard, Chamomile, Gooseberry, and Canary were naturally much depressed in their minds still for the loss of their bits of gossamer; though their Captain had indulged a hope that their prolonged salt-water bath might have washed some of the sentiment and susceptibility out of them. It had not done so, however, and as soon as they found themselves once more landed in safety and escaped from the perils of the deep, they gave themselves up to the indulgence of regret in the weakest manner. Tuflongbo lost all patience with them, and wished heartily they had their Elves back again; but as wishing would not bring them, he organized a quick march instead, to revive their spirits, and led the way towards a

dense forest of spice-trees which appeared to half-cover the largest of the beautiful Balmy Isles.

On entering this agreeable scene, they were all reminded of home, of Tanglewood, and of the sweet prospects about the Enchanted Bower, matters which profitably engaged their thoughts and conversation, until they were alarmed by hearing a chorus of pathetic cries, like the voices of Elves in distress.

"To the rescue of suffering innocence!" cried Tuflongbo, and instantly rushed forward to the scene of strife, with Snub, Chickweed, and all the band close upon his heels. And when they reached it, what did they see but the despicable Crumplecues bearing away six gentle Elves, who proved to be no other than Pearl, Puff, Cherry, Snowflake, Flutter, and Fleece!

No need then to cry, "Charge!" Larkspur, Larch, Mustard, Chamomile, Gooseberry, and Canary charged with a will, indeed, and being reinforced by Tuflongbo, Chickweed, and the impetuous Snub, they effected such a diversion as made the atrocious Crumplecues thankful to take to their legs and beat an ignominious retreat. The poor little bits of gossamer were then almost fainting, but they still had strength enough left to throw themselves into the arms of their deliverers, and to weep tears of joy upon their bosoms. It

was altogether the most pathetic scene Tuflongbo had ever witnessed.

"Then you were not those cruel, mocking Mermaids, bright Elves?" demanded the sprightly Captain.

"Oh! no! no!" they replied, in silvery chorus. "We were charmed to sleep, and they stole our beauty; but before they went down to the Deep-Sea Cave, they threw it away, and we have found it again; we have found it again!"

"You are lovelier than ever!" cried their enthusiastic adorers, and there was immediately a grand jubilation.

"You have wiped the blot from your 'scutcheons, and flung your white feathers to the winds, my brave followers!" then said Tuflongbo. "Let the day when you took flight before the Ogres be henceforth forgotten!"

And then having re-formed in the usual order of march, they proceeded on their way through the wood, and left it by a route directly opposite to that at which they had entered the spicy avenue. This route ran along a narrow isthmus, which, at low water, connected the island with the main land, and having left it behind, and advanced a little way across an elevated plain, they found themselves in a lovely country, diversified with hills and dales, streamlets and copses, while the green

turf was everywhere enamelled with gay flowers. The same sense of familiarity that had struck Tuflongbo before, now startled him again; and standing still, he exclaimed eagerly, "Where are we?" To which his comrades replied, shouting as with one voice, "Almost at home!—almost at home!"

And there, behold, they were, indeed, on a bright hill-top, looking down on the chief city of Sheneland, on the Royal Palace, on the Enchanted Bower, and a thousand other charming and beloved scenes. The shock of this delightful surprise was too much for Tuflongbo's patriotic feelings, and he wept for joy at the prospect of approaching reunion with all who were dear to him; while his gallant followers embraced enthusiastically in the ardour of the moment, and the fair Elves clapped their snowy hands for glee, there swelled up towards them a sound of distant music, and they espied a procession with banners, winding in and out of the glades of Elfinwood, apparently coming to meet and congratulate them on their safe return.

Immediately they shook the dust from their chameleon coats, which wore a beautiful green hue in the freshness of morning, set their knapsacks straight, took firm grip of their staves, and marched gaily on, their pretty companions blushing like roses at their heroes' triumphant appearance.

Tuflongbo, Chickweed, and Snub, headed the column, Snub exalting his mere stump of a tail as if it were a handsome feathery member, and perking up his ears with airs and antics such as would have been unpardonable in any but a far-travelled dog. Chickweed did not look very exuberant, being in reality disappointed at the abrupt conclusion of his adventures; but Tuflongbo trod as if upon air, so proudly did his heart beat at having made his great journey in search of Ogres successfully, and brought back all his band safe and sound after their numerous hazards and hair-breadth escapes.

Thus they marched leisurely on in the morning, and gracefully as if returning from a party of pleasure, until they approached the Enchanted Bower, where they found Queen Osmunda waiting with her bevy of Maids of Honour, Court Pages, Muffin, and Mother Dignity in attendance. There was no formal state reception, such as the great adventurer was honoured with later in his famous career, but only a very cordial greeting on all sides. Her Majesty shook hands with Tuflongbo, and graciously conferred on him as a pledge of her approval the Serene Order of Complacency and Grand Cross of Vanity, which made him feel superlatively bland and sleek within.

Chickweed was next recognized as an eccentric

character, then Larkspur, Larch, Mustard, Canary, Gooseberry, and Chamomile, were congratulated; and finally the Elves, who had gone through such terrible persecutions at the hands of fiery-tailed Griffins, of Crumplecues, and of envious Mermaids, were kissed, cried over, and bewildered with thousands of questions, until Mother Dignity took them under her protection, and sent messengers to apprise their mourning families of their blissful deliverance. Meanwhile, the Queen amiably ratified their betrothal to their gallant adorers, and then returning to the palace with them under her special care, left Tuflongbo and his companions to receive the exuberant welcome of the miscellaneous multitudes that had poured forth to meet them as soon as the news of their arrival spread.

Foremost amongst these came the eloquent Wild Sorrel, who could hardly find terms to express his ecstasy. Then came Poplar, Sycamore, Sardony, Mezereon, Borage, Box, Dandelion, Fig, and hosts of others, to all of whose good wishes Tuflongbo hearkened with a joyous patience, while ever and anon turning his head in the hope of beholding his father and mother making their eager way through the crowd. But they did not appear, neither did Rudbeakia or Gourd, his old masters; so Tuflongbo bethought himself that they were

*old* and therefore could hardly come out thus far to meet him; and as soon as he could conveniently withdraw himself from the press he did so, and sped away alone, light as a leaf upon the tree, towards the chief city of Sheneland—that being the nearest way to his father's house: and on the road he indulged his heart in a thousand sweet visions of their glad meeting, the tears swelling in his eyes again and again, though in his breast there was no sense but one of intense happiness and thankfulness.

## XVI.

### THE OLD COBBLER'S MESSAGE TO TUFLONGBO.

Tuflongbo loitered not an instant by the way, but walked his swiftest up the straight street that runs through the midst of the city until he drew near to the stall where lived the old Cobbler with the big head and buckles to his breeches, court-fashion, who had made him his famous shoes—square-toed, double-soled, and with nails in the heels. The Cobbler was sitting by the open window, still at work, and raising his grey head as Tuflongbo approached, he cried out—"Thou

TUFLONGBO VISITS THE OLD COBBLER. p. 202.

hast gotten back, then, Tuflongbo! Didst thou make a good journey?"

"Very good," replied the leader of the adventurers. "I will come and tell you of it anon; now I go to rejoice the hearts of my dear father and mother." Thus speaking, he would have hastened forward, but the old Cobbler said, gravely, "Step in hither, my friend, I have a message to thee from them:" and Tuflongbo feeling, he knew not why, inexpressibly chilled and saddened, turned aside into the Cobbler's stall.

"How long is it, Tuflongbo, since thou didst bid thy father and mother farewell?" asked he, still steadily plying his task.

"I know not—travellers take little heed of time," was Tuflongbo's answer.

"Thy beard is grown, and the fairykin curls on thy head are thinner and less bright than they were. *Their* heads were grey at thy departing, if thou doest remember?"

"I remember nothing but that I was very glad to go."

"Still thou wast a good son, Tuflongbo: it is only natural that fairykins should plume their wings for flight when they are fully grown. They bade me tell thee once more how they loved thee, since they were not permitted to await thy return.

They also have set off on a journey, but thou wilt overtake them presently."

"Whither are they gone?" asked the adventurer.

"They are gone on before thee to Shadowland, Tuflongbo. I also shall soon be on my way thither, for my leather is nearly used up and my work ended. Another winter over, and I shall be setting forth too. Tell me how thy shoes that I made thee have worn?"

"They have worn well—I see not yet that they are any the worse," replied Tuflongbo.

"They are, nevertheless, imperceptibly losing strength every day. But thou hast many another long journey and wild adventure before thee, and they will outlast them all. Be not cast down, my friend; time stands not still. Go back to thy brave followers, and to thy work of traveller through Sheneland until Shadowland and the Inn of Rest are gained. You and I shall hardly meet here again, Tuflongbo, and strangers are at home in thy father's house. Let us now say good-by, and go. Good-by, Tuflongbo."

"Good-by," responded the weary adventurer, and with his trusty staff in his hand, he turned away, leaving the days of his youth behind for ever.

# Part the Fourth.

## TUFLONGBO'S SHOES WEAR OUT.

### I.

#### A SUMMARY OF HIS MID-CAREER.

At this period of Tuflongbo's busy and distinguished life it is expedient that a brief summary should be given of those famous adventures, of which fuller chronicles can be read elsewhere; and this his biographer will now proceed to offer, preparatory to following him on his last brief journey with the Young Observer in and out and round about the remote parts of Sheneland, which closed his public career with infinite honour and glory.

He remained at Elfin Court but a few months after his triumphant return from Ogreland, and then set out on a voyage of discovery to the country of the Aplepivi. During this exploration he was unaccompanied by any supporters what-

ever, and travelled only with a simple knapsack and walking-stick; but, his humble appointments notwithstanding, he made some most remarkable and valuable additions to the astronomical learning and agricultural wealth of his native land. In the first place, he found out the use to which the old Moons are put—namely, that men in blue aprons cut them up and make them into Stars of all magnitudes and every degree of brilliance—the story of which he had the honour of relating before Queen Osmunda and all Elfin Court in full state assembled. Besides solving this wonderful astronomical puzzle, he crossed the Great Sea, which was but three sights over, landed on the snow-white shores of the country of the Aplepivi, formed an alliance with the people for commercial purposes, and brought home honey and delicious fruit as a tribute to the Queen of Sheneland. On this occasion he wore a cloak of peacocks' eyes—an assumption which made him some enemies amongst the Royal Society of Wiseacres; but the feast he gave them with the Court after his lecture was concluded ameliorated their prejudices, and he ever afterwards continued on the best of terms with them. At this epoch, in consideration of his valuable scientific services, he was appointed State Geographer and Astronomer.

Tuflongbo's next commission was to discover the

whereabouts of the Puffraspabi and Alecompagni, two lost tribes who emigrated from Sheneland in the reign of Queen Russet's predecessor, Queen Dull; in this, also, he was eminently successful, bringing back several families, and re-settling them amongst the people.

After this he went down with Prince Glee into Wildwaste, the stronghold of the Giants, whither fair Princess Trill had been decoyed on her wedding-day by the cruel machinations of her wicked Aunt Spite. After her rescue he remained at Court just long enough to see her safely and comfortably married to her amiable Prince Glee, and then set off with a large Elfin company on that tremendous journey through the Enchanted Forest of Stone, during which little Content followed his vagrant fortunes. Returning thence full of honours, spoils, and wonderful stories, the Queen and Court gave him a State reception, and he was made a Knight Fairy of the Most Noble Order of Valour—the highest dignity that can be conferred by a sovereign of Sheneland on a brave and loyal subject.

A brief period of adversity and persecution followed close on his exaltation, but out of this his fame emerged all the brighter and clearer for the temporary eclipse; and after sharing in various festivities at Court, and attending the marriages of

some of his Elfin Band, he was soon on the wing again. His only follower on this occasion was the Young Observer, a boy from the Country under the Sun, who was staying with his sister Roly-Poly on a charming visit to Professor Holiday, just at the time Sir Tuflongbo happened to come home after his adventurous travels through the Enchanted Forest of Stone. They immediately struck up a grand alliance of friendship, and one night, when everybody else was at a Royal Feast, eating like Kings and Queens, they set quietly off without leaving any clue as to whither they were gone; and the next morning, when their flight was discovered, they were far away beyond the Enchanted Bower, with a journey before them to the remote parts of Sheneland; and the Young Observer, then feeling himself safe from pursuit and capture, got into high feather and the very best of good spirits.

## II.

### TUFLONGBO ABOLISHES A BAD CUSTOM.

The first station where the travellers rested was a curious place, where the Young Observer was shocked to see an assemblage of infants teaching

their grandmothers to suck eggs. The old ladies were sitting upon a narrow bench, with their worthy toes turned in, their chins sunk on their bosoms, and their minds generally in a state of profound dejection. The famous Adventurer put on his spectacles, and regarded them with tender pity and sympathy; many strange things had he seen in his journeying, but never had he seen anything that touched him with so indignant a compassion as the position and aspect of these persecuted and venerable dames; and the Young Observer felt precisely the same.

Up and down before them marched their dreadfully clever grandchildren, some in knickerbockers of poppy cloth, some in fan-tailed pigeon gossamer, but all bearing on their arms baskets of poultry produce labelled with all sorts of hard words.

"Now, granny dear, this Egg is Physical Geography!" cried one small pedagogue in petticoats. "Apply it to your lips, take a good suck —thus—and then be pleased to mention in the order of their importance the great watersheds of Sheneland."

Granny wept behind her glasses, and was dumb. Sir Tuflongbo could have wept, too, and he registered a silent vow to do his best to discourage henceforward this abominable practice of the

younger folks teaching their elders; but being there with the Young Observer for the express purpose of gathering useful knowledge, he gave his attention diligently to the methods of instruction pursued in this singular school of learning and morals.

One irreverent monkey bade his mamsie look alive, and give him the altitude of the nearest fixed star; another demanded the animal products of the moon; a third preached up the new principle of moral suasion; a fourth talked physiology, criticism, poetry, trigonometry, and heresy, like an addled philosopher; while a fifth set his grannie sums that were of no more use than money gone mad!

Sir Tuflongbo found his patience sorely tried, but he had yet worse tortures of temper to suffer. Presently, a small shrill-voiced prig got out an Egg of Facts to correct Fancies, and was for making his granny swallow it whole, while he proved to her that there were no such creatures as Ogres. Didn't Sir Tuflongbo give him a tweak of the ear for *that!* Then a still more intolerable little imp pulled a long face like a fiddle, professed a preference for work over play, and for *sweet* verses over funny tales—but that was the fairykin who stole the jam.

The famous Adventurer was set fairly beside

himself on hearing these precocious *goody* pretences. He sprang up from his seat suddenly, with a jerk, as if till that moment he had been wired down to it, and, making a rush on the baskets, with half a dozen dexterous applications of his toe, he did kick all those ridiculous Eggs out of them, and the Young Observer gladly lent his assistance to disperse them into dusty nooks and corners, where nobody could ever find them again. Then the grannies gave vent to a cheer of relief, and after a momentary dismay the fairykins threw off their sham airs of wisdom, joined in it, and became quite naturally nice, noisy, and naughty—a most agreeable variety on their previous primness. They then espied Sir Tuflongbo, and gathered clustering round his knees, crying, "Tell us a story! Oh, tell us a story! Do, please, dear, darling old Tuflongbo!"

"What shall it be about?" asked the great Traveller, who was easily propitiated when tiny hands plucked at him, and tiny, soft warm faces crowded up to his.

"Oh, something jolly! Don't put a moral in it to teach us how *bad* we are and how *good* we might be," whispered a sly rogue, curling a quaint nose in confidence at his friend. Sir Tuflongbo understood him perfectly, and when order was restored, he narrated to his eager little audience

the wonderful story of The Enchanted Dumplings, while the Boy from the Country under the Sun sat by taking notes of it.

## III.

### THE STORY OF THE ENCHANTED DUMPLINGS.

Once upon a time there lived in Sheneland a very poor couple on whom had been bestowed the blessing of two sons—twins—whose names were Lappit and Lob. Now, though their father and mother loved them very dearly, it was often a difficult matter to find their hungry, growing children enough to eat; so on a certain day they called them into their presence, and after many tears and embraces, gave them a benediction, and bade them go into the forest, and seek food for themselves. Lappit and Lob were not sorry to become thus early their own masters, and they turned away from their humble birthplace without regret—life with its grand chances was all before them—behind them was only love, and meek poverty with contentment. But before they set out their father gave them one piece of excellent advice.

"My beloved sons," said he, gravely; "let me warn you to neglect no passing joy in the ardour of your pursuit after any single object. Our journey is never very long, and the end of our work comes soon enough; therefore stretch not forward too eagerly, lest you neglect for a distant phantom a present and substantial good. The pleasure, the suffering, and the provision for each day come with it—do not shut your eyes to be rid of any one of them. Take them as they arrive and be thankful."

And Lappit and Lob started forth on their travels and labours, faithfully intending to follow their father's sage counsel. It was then morning, and very pleasant, fresh, spring weather. The road they took had a thousand charms for their unaccustomed eyes, but they began by and by to wish for some change in its monotony, or, at any rate, for some special object of attainment after their hard work of walking hour after hour.

At length said Lappit, "Dear Lob, do you ever remember hearing tell of the marvellous Enchanted Dumplings that are to be found in this forest? I think if I could only find one I should be completely happy."

"Yes, I have heard of them," replied Lob. "Let us seek some—the very thought was in my mind when you spoke!"

"What a remarkable coincidence! Then, rely on it, we are going to have good luck," cried Lappit.

"Fortune grant it!" answered Lob, and away they went, quickening their pace, cheerfully and hopefully together.

They had not gone far when they heard a sound of chop, chop, chop, and that was the suet; then of stir, stir, stir, and that was mixing the dough; then of hiss, bubble, bubble, and that was dumplings boiling in the pot! The next thing that happened was very singular indeed. A brace of tidy little dumplings were flung out on the road before them, which immediately began to roll and bowl, and trundle themselves away in desperate haste while Lappit and Lob gave hot and eager chase.

Lappit, in his desire to capture one of them, literally flung himself full length on the ground with arms extended to the utmost stretch, and was within an ace of reaching it when it gave a great leap and swift! was miles ahead before he could recover his feet. Then Lob, perceiving that his brother failed in thus making a dash at the sweet object of his desires, determined to try craft with his dumpling, and executed many clever manœuvres in and out amongst the trees, and laid many wily ambushes to entrap it, but none of

them succeeded; and the pursuers were already breathless while the Enchanted Dumplings still rolled on as merrily and mockingly as ever!

Lappit, as it then appeared, was of a temper easily discouraged, for he now began to protest that he saw no chance of overtaking them, and Lob was just on the point of agreeing with him, when a husky voice said from amidst the brambles, "You must have more patience. Frantic bursts of strength never avail in a race with Enchanted Dumplings. You must run steadily to endeavour to tire them down."

Lappit and Lob looked about for the speaker, but they saw no one, and as the Dumplings were just vanishing on the edge of the horizon, they determined to make a new effort to catch them ere it was too late; and so they fell into a long swinging trot, which did not exhaust their own strength, but covered a great extent of ground, and at length they became sure that they were gaining on their prey. They kept up their peculiar pace without ever flagging, for each moment now visibly lessened the distance between pursuers and pursued, and the Enchanted Dumplings betrayed evident signs of distress.

"Five minutes more of steady running and they are ours!" panted Lob; and at the end of that time they *were* theirs, and the brace of tidy little

Dumplings gave up the ghost with a jolly laugh, owning themselves fairly caught.

Then the twin brothers gaily sat down under the shade of a spreading tree and each plied a gallant knife and fork upon his spoil. They ate with excellent appetite, praised the cook, extolled the puddings; and, though very diligent in satisfying their own needs, both readily spared some good solid slices to certain hungry poor folks who came to look on.

When they had eaten sufficient they rose and proceeded on their way, cheerful and refreshed, still singing the praises of the tidy little Dumplings which they had so much enjoyed. But the sight of a middle-aged person in the very crisis of capturing one twice as big, changed their merry mood to one of extreme dissatisfaction, and they began to make critical and sarcastic remarks upon what had so recently been the object of their ardent desire and pursuit.

"After all, Lob, our Dumplings were not worth the trouble we were at to overtake them," said Lappit contemptuously. "They were but very plain puddings and must have been made in a monstrous high wind; for, if you observed, the plums were not on speaking terms with each other."

"I was just making the same reflection,"

answered Lob; "I am sure I cannot resign myself to never tasting anything better than that poor pasty stuff—pasty stuff without sauce too—Ugh!"

"I wish we could have the chance of such a prize as we saw that stranger picking up just now," sighed Lappit.

"So do I, and then we should be happy, indeed!" responded Lob.

And with that they toiled on their way, envious and despondent, until they heard the chop, chop, chop, stir, stir, stir, hiss, bubble, bubble of Dumplings boiling in the pot!

"I do believe we are going to have another chance!" then cried Lappit; and immediately two big, bouncing Enchanted Dumplings sprang full in front of their feet, rested a moment to enjoy their astonishment, and then took to flight precisely as their tidy little predecessors had done!

Then away went Lappit and Lob in chase, over hill and dale, through bush, through briar, panting, puffing, tripping, stumbling, seeing none of the pleasant beautiful scenes by the way, and with eyes, hearts, and minds, intent on nothing but the big bouncing Enchanted Dumplings which kept well in front, and seemed twenty times and more as if they were on the point of winning the race. But the brothers, though heated and thirsty, still

followed energetically, and at last their spoil was secured, but not without immense pain and difficulty.

"Oh! what a dreadful pain I have in my side!" sobbed Lappit.

"And oh! how shockingly stiff are my poor legs," sighed Lob; but they both nevertheless sat down and ate their pudding.

Then again came starved waifs and strays and eyed them hungrily; but though they had ten times more than they could possibly enjoy, they did not feel half so much inclined to be liberal as when they had only just enough for themselves. They talked of shams and impostors and felt themselves very wise, good, responsible people—but not liberal, and it was with rather an effort that they at last condescended to say, as the poor starved folks were going empty away, "If you can wait till we have finished, then you may pick up our crumbs." So the hungry folks picked them up and being half filled were proportionably grateful. Those who had shared the tidy little Dumplings blessed them—these were dumb.

The brothers made a heavy meal and sat long over it, but tiring at length even of that luxurious indulgence, they got up and marched on; not with half the spirit they had before, which they attributed to advancing age.

"We are neither of us so young as we have been," said Lappit; "and chasing Enchanted Dumplings is certainly hard work."

"So it is," agreed Lob; "but look—see that old fellow with a Dumpling as big as a house! If he is not going to scoop a hole in the middle of it and get in!"

"He's comfortable for life—I wish we were!" gasped Lappit, swelling with covetousness till his eyes nearly started out of his head.

"How unjustly things are dealt to be sure!" muttered Lob; "*we* must toil on, while that decrepit creature has only to enjoy himself." And thus the brothers growled and grumbled until the displeasing spectacle of another's wealth was lost to view.

So they went on, never much exerting themselves, nor at all amusing themselves; their every thought being bent on the possibility of Enchanted Dumplings as big as houses being granted to them in reward for their well-spent lives; for they were both of opinion that they deserved them.

"Consider how hard we have struggled and striven with our lot," said Lappit. "What a vigorous race we ran for our first Dumplings, and how completely we forgot everything else in our pursuit of the second? If *we* are not meritorious, *who* is?"

"Perhaps if we give our whole minds to the search, we may yet conquer a third brace vast as that old fellow's, who was scooping a hole out of his to live in," suggested Lob. "Do not let us give up ambition yet."

"By no means. Not while there is a plum to be had," replied Lappit. And so they stretched forward on their journey, eagerly looking out for their great chance of a provision for life.

They were now travelling swiftly down hill, and near the bottom of the descent they espied two gigantic Enchanted Dumplings, apparently at a stand-still in one place. They immediately broke into a hobbling run, and, coming up with them, each clapped a hand on the one he chose, and shouted in a voice of husky triumph, "Mine!" Then both burst into feeble tears of pleasure, being no longer strong enough to control their feelings. As soon as they had a little recovered from the weakness they set to work to make a hole in the middle of their Dumplings, and when the task was accomplished, in they got, and wearily curled themselves up.

"Ugh!" grunted Lappit. "I don't know that it was worth while. I feel very much like falling asleep, now it is done."

"Plague on it!" snarled Lob. "When one has a rich house one must keep one's

eyes open, for fear of thieves; and I am very drowsy."

These were private reflections, made by each to himself, and not meant to be overheard; but they were overheard, and presently the voice that had advised them in the pursuit of the first Dumplings, asked, quite close at hand—

"Well, Lappit; well, Lob, now you are comfortable for life, I hope you are satisfied."

"Moderately so," responded the brothers, simultaneously.

Here there gathered round the rich castle-puddings an immense crowd of destitute, hungry folks with long grey wondering faces, and pallid blank eyes; their look, their attitude, their very gaze, were prayers, and they chilled the atmosphere with the cloud of their misery. The brothers stared at them with angry surprise, and then exclaimed—"Get out of our sunshine! we have nothing to give you. Go work, go race; tire down Enchanted Dumplings for yourselves!" But the poor Waifs and Strays stretched forth lean hands and begged again, and again, and again, but to no purpose. Lappit and Lob buried themselves in the sweet softness of their enchanted dwellings, and would not spare them so much as a crumb. Then gradually they faded away, and

when they were gone the air was colder than ever—cold as an icy east wind.

"We appear well off, but it is shivering winter here, brother, don't you find it so?" presently whispered Lappit.

"Yes, and desperate lonely. How is it with your appetite now?" asked Lob.

"Lost!—quite lost! There is neither freshness nor savour in anything," was Lappit's dreary reply.

"Most true. I believe, after all, our first Dumplings were the best," said Lob.

"Not a doubt of it. I'm sure they were," agreed Lappit. "What is the use of these unwieldy things to us? They would feed a multitude."

"Then why did you send away starving a multitude?" demanded the stern, unseen voice.

"Why, indeed? Are we, with the fruits of our toils, to fatten all the poor folks in Sheneland?" cried Lappit, indignantly.

"I should think not!" sneered Lob. "What we have raced and wrought for is our own, and shall never be lavished on the thriftless."

"Success has hardened your hearts, brothers!" said the invisible voice. "You were richer when you had nothing, than you are now with luxury a thousand-fold greater than your needs."

"How do you make that out?" inquired Lappit.

"*Then* you had kind thoughts of charity and mercy in your breasts, and they multiply bread and sweeten it. *Now* you are full of self and greed, which turn all things to stone; useless to you, and worse than useless; heavy as sins round your necks to strangle you, and to others cruel stumbling-blocks, which should be helps."

"I wish you would go away with your disagreeable speeches," said Lob. "We have had little enough pleasure in our lives, I'm sure; we saw very few charming sights as we raced—we had to run so hard to get what was worth having—or what seemed so. Do let us rest in peace, I beg."

"Rest if you can. Not many rest who have made so much haste to be rich as you; especially if, when their end is gained, they cannot look outside the blinding halo of their wealth."

"Wealth, indeed! don't mock us. Do you call this sickening Enchanted Dumpling wealth?" shrieked Lappit, shrilly. "I cannot eat a scrap of it, and am myself well-nigh starving for lack of simpler food; it is rich trash!"

"It is excellent pudding, but the way to enjoy it is to give large portions away. Let me call back those hungry poor folks," said the voice.

"No, no; we have nothing else. We were

at such pains to get it, pray let us keep it whole!" entreated the brothers. "Why, it has cost us all our lives to earn!"

"And it will end by choking you! Too much pudding, like too much money, always destroys those who are over greedy to share it. If you refuse to be advised, I have done with you." And the voice fainted off into a long echo of distress, which ceased not to ring in the brothers' ears until they both fell fast asleep.

And as soon as that happened, down came a flight of birds of the air, and pecked the puddings to pieces, and strewed the crumbs all abroad on the earth; eating some, but wasting ten times more. And so the Enchanted Dumplings that would have fed a multitude never came to any good at all, and the names of Lappit and Lob were forgotten, except "to point a moral and adorn a tale!"

## IV.

### SIR TUFLONGBO LAYS BY HIS KNAPSACK AND WALKING-STICK.

"WHO would have expected Sir Tuflongbo's Enchanted Dumplings to turn out sad!" murmured the Boy from the Country under the Sun; and then he

shut up his tablets solemnly, and for three seconds and a half, he felt quite out of sorts. "If ever I am rich," thought he, "I'll try to make as many poor bodies happy as I can. It must be miserable work to have a pudding big enough for a score all to oneself; I could not enjoy it if it were drowned in sauce and all blue-blaze with brandy. The real fun of it is for lots of folks to be merry and thankful together. Lappit and Lob were miserly churls who did not know how to be rich—for it is a good thing to be rich if we have the heart to use money well and wisely."

Thus moralized the Young Observer, but the little Fairykins, for whose special delectation the legend had been told, took it very literally, and as soon as it was finished, set gaily off to the nearest wood to seek Enchanted Dumplings on their own account. Sir Tuflongbo admonished them not to let the grass grow under their feet, but to be diligent in the quest, and then he took up his knapsack and walking-stick to proceed on his travels once more; feeling, if the truth must be told, rather stiffer in his limbs than he used to do, and less buoyant and sanguine in his spirits than was his wont. But he did his best to be cheerful, and not in vain; for he had always cultivated that temper, and it was not likely to fail him when he began to have most need of it.

For many another day he and his young companions journeyed on, making at each turn some new discovery, some useful reflection or some practical remark. Sir Tuflongbo's renown had gone before him to the remotest corners of Shene-land; and wherever he presented himself, he was received with honourable welcome. Thus the Observer enjoyed many high privileges. Under the famous Adventurer's wing, he passed safely through the awful district of Marshollows, where he saw the Electrical Serpentes at play, Gymnotus the Ancient leading the revels. He explored the Cavern of Subterranean Cataracts, dived down a Wishing-well, crossed the Valley of a Thousand Rills, and visited an Ogre at home, where he received most hospitable entertainment for Sir Tuflongbo's sake. After this he went into Wild-waste, ascended the highest peak of the Skihi mountains, and formed the personal acquaintance of a Crumplecue. At this point of their travels, it became painfully evident that Sir Tuflongbo's great strength and energy were, at last, beginning to fail him, and the Young Observer gently guided his steps towards the haunts of civilization.

It was towards the close of a glorious autumnal day that they entered the glades of the Enchanted Forest, where still dwelt little Content with his father and mother under their thatched roof

garlanded with evergreen clematis. The famous Traveller leant wearily on his young friend, who exhorted him to sit down and rest.

"By-and-by," said he, "by-and-by—a few paces more, a few paces more;" and his invincible courage carried him in sight of his former merry little comrade's abode. Content was looking out at the serene loveliness of the sky, and enjoying the pleasant leisure that follows on well-done work, when he espied his dear old Captain approaching. Immediately he ran forward to meet him, brought him in-doors, gave him of the best the house contained, and made him most heartily welcome.

"You will stay with me, you will not go any farther, my beloved master," cried he, and kissed the aged Adventurer's hand.

"No; I shall not go any farther now," replied Sir Tuflongbo, laying by his knapsack and trusty staff. "My shoes, as you see, are nearly worn out. The toes are through, and the last nail dropped from the heels as we crossed this peaceful threshold. I have done with my labours, and they have done with me. But, friend, put by the curtain and set wide the door—let me see the last of the sun, for I always loved it, and I want it to warm me now, for my old bones are chill. Soon I shall fall asleep—night comes."

Content did the great Traveller's bidding, and

the Young Observer hastened away to warn Sir Tuflongbo's many friends that he was returned home, so they might come to bid him farewell ere he went to rest; and at his first word, all who knew him, big and little, great and small, high and low, rich and poor, rushed in crowds to where he lay, supported in the tender and faithful arms of Content.

Queen Osmunda herself appeared, attended by Prince Goldheart, Prince Glee, Sir Arum, and many more of her Court, who loved the ancient Adventurer; and after a brief conversation with him on his latest exploits, she remarked that it was wonderful to see him so blithe and cheerful at his years. He thanked his Gracious Mistress, and thought his eyes must be failing him, for he fancied he could perceive a white line in her hair and a wrinkle on her lovely brow: he asked if this were so, indeed.

"Yes, Sir Tuflongbo, it is so; wrinkles and white hairs come to queens as to subjects," replied she, with a smile; "but I heed them not, for I and all whom I love are growing old together."

"Ay, ay," said the great Traveller; "'tis no fancy—my chameleon suit has lost its brightness also. There have been many changes in Shene-land since it was new, and I think the old fashions suited me best."

Here some stupid person ventured to suggest that perhaps the famous Adventurer was losing his memory; but his quick ear caught the harsh insinuation, and he promptly denied it. "Nothing of the sort!" cried he: "my last public service was to abolish an odious custom amongst Fairykins, of teaching their grannies to suck eggs; and *your* face I recollect as that of a little Prig who wanted to make his swallow one whole!" On which the stupid person retired in confusion, amidst the jeers and frowns of everybody there assembled.

Roly-Poly then came running in, breathless, with a troop of playfellows, and having climbed up on her dear, old, indulgent friend's knee, she entreated him to tell them all just *one* more story before he went to sleep. So Sir Tuflongbo stroked her golden head, took down his wallet from the wall, where Content had hung it when he laid it by, and picked out a short tale; then passed the receptacle, with all its multifarious collections of legends, parables, puzzles, and riddles, to the Young Observer, charging him to convey it to Fancy, the Court Moralist and Story-teller, as soon as he was fallen asleep; and the Boy faithfully promised to do his behests.

Every one present then sat down in a circle, and silence having been proclaimed, the Great

Traveller and Adventurer, with his toil-worn, brown old hand resting on Roly-Poly's golden head, began to speak, and told his last story to his little friends.

## V.

### SIR TUFLONGBO'S LAST STORY.

Long, long ago, in the reign of the venerable Queen Dull, there was found in an acorn-cup a most beautiful little Fairykin, to whom her Majesty solemnly stood godmother, and because a little crested curl rose up on his forehead like a horn, she gave him the name of Prince Topknot.

Prince Topknot was educated at Court, and was made learned in all the graces and elegancies of manner then in fashion, and by reason of his pure descent from the Royal Oak Tree, a great deal more deference was paid to his whims and fancies than was at all good for him; in consequence of which, he grew extremely conceited. When he walked, it was always with his nose and his crested curl in the air, as if his eyes were too noble to look on the common earth; and many an awkward, humiliating tumble he got before he could condescend to notice the ground he trod on.

Now one day it happened that Queen Dull wished for some poppy-seed to sow in her summer garden where she slept of an afternoon, and Prince Topknot being sent out to gather some, came back with *sand* instead.

"What is this thou hast brought me, Prince Topknot?" asked the Queen, much disturbed.

"*Poppy-seed*," answered the Prince.

"Never grew *poppy* from *sand* yet! Some jester hath befooled thee!"

"A ragged little witling met me in the meads, and when I told him what I wanted, he gave me that, and said it was poppy-seed."

"Hadst thou no eyes in thy head to *see* that it was mere sand-grains off the shore? Prince Topknot, thou wilt never be wise until thou hast learnt to use thy own *servants*, instead of letting the first knave that comes play thee ill tricks."

"*Servants!*—who are my servants?" muttered the Prince; "I have none!"

"Hast thou no *eyes* to behold with, no *tongue* to speak with, no *feet* to walk with, no *hands* to handle with, no *head* to think with, no *heart* to feel with?"

"Everybody has *those*," was the contemptuous rejoinder.

"And though thou wert a King instead of a foolish little Princekin, thou couldst have none

better, and none so faithful!" And the Queen was angry at his ridiculous pride, and commanded him to leave her presence; and then came the ragged little witling, and brought true poppy-seed to sow in the summer-garden where she slept of an afternoon.

From that day forth Prince Topknot was quite out of favour at Court, and his rival, the ragged little witling, was made Prime Minister; but then he was ragged no longer, being clad in the best silk that the looms of Sheneland could spin. This reverse of fortune was extremely displeasing to the Prince, as you may well imagine, and he supported it with anything but dignity; for not only had the Queen withdrawn her countenance from him, but all those parasites and sycophants who had been foremost in upholding his vanity so long as he was in her good graces, now very obtrusively gave him the cold shoulder, and said that but for the crested curl that rose up on his forehead like a horn, and his descent from the Royal Oak Tree, he would be *nothing*.

"Take from any of *you* your chief gift of nature and fortune, and you would be *less* than nothing!" was the Prince's retort, which betrayed a certain shrewdness that might have stood him in good stead, if he would only have used it on common occasions. But as yet he could not

subdue his lofty mind to do that. He still found a few inferior persons ready to think for him, feel for him, work for him, walk for him, and see for him, *because* he was Prince Topknot, and for no other reason; and while he could thus keep his own servants in the luxury of pure idleness, he was quite contented to use theirs; but it was a very negligent duty they paid him in return for his unwise confidence.

If he asked what sort of weather it was, one would tell him, "The sun shines, your Highness," though the very sky was falling in torrents of rain; but the Prince took his walk, and of course came back drenched to the skin. If he remarked that he felt hungry, his cook sent him word that he had had his dinner; and though he *knew* he was empty, he was bound to believe him. At length, Princekin as he was, he fell into such a miserable state of slavery to those who surrounded him that there was not, perhaps, any more abjectly wretched person in all Queen Dull's dominions than he.

He endured this state of things for some time with passive pride, fortifying himself with ideas of his crested curl and his pure descent from the Royal Oak Tree. But sitting one afternoon in solitary magnificence under his great grandsire's shadow, two ragged witlings — cousins to the

Prime Minister — came peeping round by the trunk, and after making several sly remarks on his serene state of self-glorification, they broke into a peal of mocking laughter, and declared they would not change places with Prince Topknot for all the crested curls in Sheneland. The Prince eyed them angrily and bade them begone, but he had now so few claims to personal respect that those who were independent of him did not consider it worth while to pay any deference to his dignity, and the pert witlings, instead of departing, only came round in front and danced a defiant jig before him. The Prince shut his eyes and pretended not to see them, but there were plenty of people ready to din an account of their insulting antics into his ears, and to magnify them twenty-fold.

At last said poor Topknot, "I won't bear this any longer!" and in a desperate moment he shaved off his crested curl, disguised himself in plain clothes and ran away from Court, leaving friends and foes, parasites and mocking witlings behind him, and carrying absolutely nothing away but his own long lazy personal servants.

His first day's journey carried him some leagues deep into Tanglewood, and when he was preparing to rest for the night, he was painfully reminded that he had neither food nor bed. But these

needs notwithstanding, he felt easier and more cheerful in his temper than he had ever done since the day when he brought sand for poppy-seed to Queen Dull, and thus fell out of her favour. As long as the twilight lasted, he gathered wild berries and ate them for supper; and being satisfied, he plucked up reeds by the armful and made himself a couch under a tree, where he slept a sound, sweet slumber.

The next morning he awoke betimes, perfectly refreshed, and proceeding on his way, was joined by an ancient wood-cutter going out into the forest for his day's work. The labourer carried his axe on his shoulder, and being aged, he could walk but slowly; the Prince, therefore, feelingly accommodated his own young feet to his companion's heavy steps, and when they reached that part of the wood which was being cleared, he offered to take the axe and do his task for him.

"You may if you can," replied the wood-cutter, and he gave the stranger his tool.

"*If I can!*" echoed the proud Prince, with laughing contempt. "Why, of course I can!" and seizing the axe he swung it round his head with great demonstration of force, and aimed a blow at the biggest and toughest ash-tree he could find.

The Forester looked on, smiling to himself,

until the beads of sweat began to stand on the eager Prince's brow; for though he had not yet cleft one clean stroke through the bark, he had struck it fifty times, and hundreds of little chips and scraps strewed the ground about it; but his wild work did not look much like felling the tree, either that day or any other day.

"You are wasting your strength for nought, friend," then said the old labourer. "Let me give you a lesson." And taking the axe from Prince Topknot's hands, he showed him how to use it with due effect.

"Now let me try again," cried the young Prince, when he perceived what he must do; and this time striking with a will and with wisdom too, he began to make vast progress in his self-set task. It was morning when he began it; by noon he was half-way through the trunk, and towards evening down crashed the green tree upon the sward.

"That is well done!" cried the Forester, "and enough for one day."

"I never knew before what pleasure there is in *real work*," said the Prince, delighted, and stretched his frame and limbs, feeling new vigour and energy in every nerve.

"Never knew before what pleasure there is in real work!" echoed the wood-cutter. "Why,

where have you wasted your youth until now? *He who has not worked, has not lived.*"

"I was born a Prince," was the answer, "and such have no need to work. They find the world ready made for them."

"Oh, fool! fool! fool!" exclaimed the ancient labourer; "'tis they who help make the world; and whether they do their part well or ill, surely the praise or the blame of it shall lie on them for ever. Who made Princes, made the work for Princes, and weariful work it must needs often be, but nevertheless it must be done—*it must be done.* Therefore if yours be still neglected, let me beseech you go back whence you came, and make amends for wrong. A Prince should be double-sighted, readier of wit, keener of speech, quicker of hearing, tenderer of heart, than all others, as his work of governing is harder and nobler than theirs. You need wiser personal servants to rule fairies than to cut down trees. Now, go home and do your task."

"But I have shaved off my crested curl, and determined to be a Prince no more. I like your work better than my own," said Topknot.

"If you have shaved off your crested curl, it will grow again; and as to whether you like *your* work or *my* work best, it matters not. *You* must accomplish *yours*, and leave *me* to accomplish

*mine.* The lots we have drawn we can neither change nor throw away. Wisdom higher than ours guided us in the choice. Farewell, friend, our ways lie wide apart—yours up on those conspicuous heights, mine down into this humble dell." And with that the wood-cutter shouldered his axe and parted company with Prince Topknot.

The Prince had the natural sagacity to see the truth of his counsel and the courage to take it to heart; for the same night he journeyed back to Court, and resumed his proper place therein. Many a mortification awaited him, and many an hour of toil and disappointment before his long-indulged personal servants could be brought to work in obedience to his will. But at length he had them in thorough control and discipline, and by the time his crested curl had grown again to its former height, he had won such a reputation for prompt, quick-sighted prudence, high courage and honour, that Queen Dull, in an anxious crisis of her country's fortunes, was glad to restore him to favour, and to act by his counsels.

And the end of it all was that Prince Topknot became as widely renowned for his wisdom as he had formerly been for his folly.

## VI.

### SIR TUFLONGBO PUTS OFF HIS SHOES.

"Your face is very cold, Sir Tuflongbo," said Roly-Poly, stroking his weather-beaten cheeks with her soft dimpled hands as he finished his story. "I wish I could warm you!" And if anything could have warmed the famous old Adventurer again it would surely have been her dewy, loving caresses.

"Cold, are they, Petkin?" said he. "Well, night is coming, and night is cold too. I am very drowsy, and it is time for you to take a nap as well. But to-morrow little Roly-Poly will play again in the sun."

"And where shall you be, Sir Tuflongbo?"

"Far on my last journey—if not at the end of it."

"You won't forget your little Mouse?"

"Oh, no; I shall often think of her playing in the sun!"

"Good-night, then, Sir Tuflongbo."

"Good-night, Petkin; now run away before it is quite dark."

So Roly-Poly ran home to Professor Holiday's wife, who laid her cosily in bed, and tucked her up.

"And now, friends, since she is gone, I think it is time I put off my shoes—I shall sleep better without," said Sir Tuflongbo, looking dimly round on the rest. And so he put them off, and was sound asleep in a moment. And the Young Observer took up the far-travelled, worn-out things and made relics of them.

The next morning Sir Tuflongbo was at his journey's end, safe in Shadowland, with his dear father and mother, and bright little Roly-Poly was playing again in the sun.

THE END.

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